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THE

ADVENTURES OF A BEAUTY.

BY CATHERINE CROWE.

AUTHOR OF

"SUSAN HOPLEY," "THE STORY OF LILLY DAWSON,"
"THE NIGHTSIDE OF NATURE," &c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

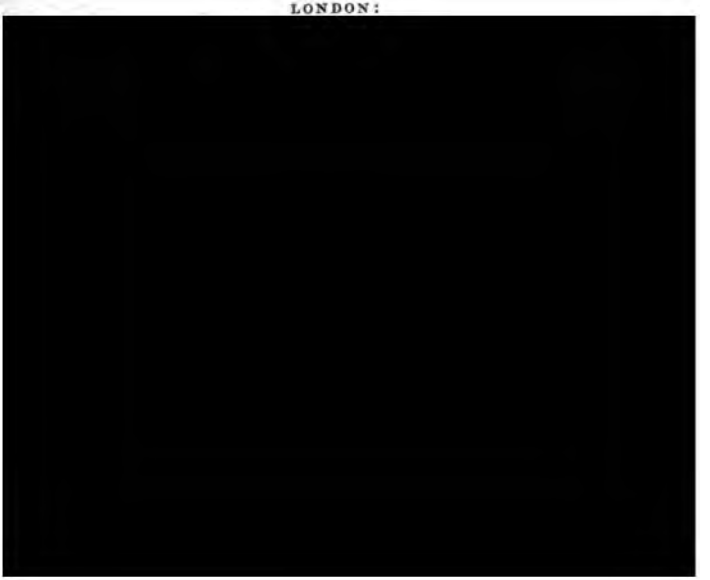
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THE

ADVENTURES OF A BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

"You had better let me harness the mare and drive you up to the park gate, Miss Agnes; you had, indeed. You'll be over your shoes afore you get across the fallow."

The person who offered this advice was a ruddy-faced young rustic, with an exceedingly honest, open countenance, who appeared to be prepared for some particular occasion, being evidently attired in his Sunday clothes: namely, a black velveteen jacket, striped waistcoat, fustian trowsers and laced boots, all looking new and fresh; and a yellow handkerchief round his throat, sustaining a shirt-collar, the points of which extended half way up his cheeks. As he spoke, he issued from the door

of a farm-house, followed by two women, with their bonnets and cloaks on.

"Do, Agnes," said the shortest of the females; "you'll get your death of cold, I'm sure you will."

"No, Gibby, I'd rather walk, thank ye," answered Agnes; adding in a lower tone to her sister, "You know, Martha, I couldn't go in the cart!"

"But only as far as the park gate, dear," urged Martha.

"I wouldn't for the world, Martha; so don't ask me. How do you know where he may meet us?"

"I'm afeard it's a coming on to snow again," said the young man, who she had addressed as

"It's all fast," said Gibby, "and the windows too. Please let me hold the humberheller over you, Miss Agnes, he added," deploying a large cotton umbrella, and placing himself by the side of the person he addressed, whilst with the other hand he drew after him the house door and locked it.

The party, which consisted only of these three persons, then stepped forward, passed through a wicket-gate at the bottom of a small garden, separating the house from the road, which they crossed, and having surmounted a stile, they set off at a brisk pace across the fields. Light flakes of snow, which had been falling all day at intervals, were floating in the air, and the ground, white in the less exposed spots, was black and sloppy in the paths they had to tread. The bleak wind whistled and moaned through the trees, and the night was very cold, for it was the month of December, and the Abbey clock had struck ten. Few words were spoken, for the wind and the cold, and the thoughts of the errand they were on, kept them silent, till after about an hour's walk they reached a high wall; then Agnes, handing Gibby a key, bade him open a small private door, which led into the grounds of Ravenscliffe. As soon as they were inside, Agnes looked about, as far as the faint

moonlight which now and then broke through the clouds permitted, as if seeking some one; but there was nobody visible.

"It's the bad night that's kept him from coming," said Martha. "He'll be waiting us at the chapel, may be."

"I'd run on and see, if it wasn't for leaving you here in the cold," said Gibby.

"I have a mind to go back," said Agnes.

"Oh, Agnes, don't," said Martha.

"I see a light in the chapel," said Gibby, who had swung himself up to the branch of a tree.

"Then we had better go on," said Martha, taking hold of her sister's arm. But at that mo-

"Not cold at all, we have walked so fast;" replied Agnes, "and not much wet."

"My poor Agnes!" he said, tenderly pressing her arm. "I hope you'll not get cold."

"No fear of that," she said; "but I feel so much about seeing the clergyman. How strange it must appear to him. What will he think of me?"

"What do his thoughts signify?" returned the other. "He has his own reasons for complying with my wishes and keeping my secrets, depend on it. By the bye, I hope you are quite sure of that lad behind us?"

"As sure as of myself," replied Agnes.

"Warn him of the consequences of tattling about our affairs, because an imprudent word might play the devil with us."

"He'll speak no imprudent words, I'll answer for him," said Agnes; "you little know poor Gibby. He'd cut his tongue out rather than harm either of us:—I mean, me or Martha."

"By which you intend to imply that *I* do not fill such a distinguished place in Gibby's affections. Eh?"

"He'll love you for my sake now," said Agnes.

"I shall be proud of the honour of his esteem," said the young man.

"You may," returned Agnes, gravely.

The black cloud Gibby had descried having passed over to the west without discharging its contents, the moon shone forth again, shedding its pale light on the large pile of buildings they were approaching, with its turrets and towers, broad stone terraces and well-clipped lawns.

This was Ravenscliffe Castle, or Abbey, as it was sometimes styled, and to the left of it was a small chapel with lancet windows and carved gables, which gave evidence both within and without, to the former creed of the family.

It was towards this chapel that the party we have described directed their steps. The faint light which Gibby had descried, still gleamed through the stained glass of the oriel window, but those of the

his volume, began to read the introductory words of the marriage ceremony, or rather to gabble them in a manner so hurried, purposeless, and indistinct, that it was impossible for his hearers to follow out a single sentence from beginning to end. The effect of this mode of proceeding on the female chiefly concerned, was to throw her into a state of confusion and fright, that rendered her actually incapable of answering, when the customary interrogation was addressed to her. However, this omission occasioned no pause or hesitation in the fluency of the reader, who ran on for a short time longer, and then suddenly closed the book, and bowing slightly as he passed, retired to the vestry. Amazed and stupified, and wondering whether she was married or not, Agnes involuntarily followed him with her eyes till he reached the door, which she then for the first time perceived was partly open; and she even fancied that she saw another head withdrawn as the clergyman entered.

"Wait a moment," said the young man, to whom after this fashion she had been just united in the holy bonds of matrimony, "I'll be back directly;" and he vanished into the vestry also.

"You'll not wish it registered, of course; it would never do to register," said the clergyman.

"But there should be a certificate," observed a third person, whose head it probably was that Agnes had caught a glimpse of. "It need never be produced, you know, unless it should be desirable—but it *might* be desirable. Nobody can foresee what card may turn up."

"Certainly, if we are not registered there should be a certificate by all means," said the newly-married man. "Who should sign it?"

"We should all sign," said the last speaker, "you and she, and the witnesses. I'll step aside whilst you call them in. Here's a corner that will do for me;" and so saying, he retreated behind an old oak press in which the minister's gown and books, and various other articles belonging to the chapel

lovely, and with a countenance expressing amazement, uncertainty, and dissatisfaction, she advanced to the table, conducted by her husband.

"We must sign our names," said he, taking up a pen and writing 'Lionel Grosvenor.' "Write yours underneath."

"Which name?" she inquired.

"Which?" asked Lionel, looking at the clergyman.

"Her own—Agnes Crawfurd," answered the latter; and with a hand that shook with agitation, the name was inscribed; and then, overcome by confusion, she retired from the table.

"Now, Martha Crawfurd, yours," said Lionel; and Martha, also in deep mourning, but with features and complexion that formed a curious contrast with her sister's, (for the agitation and surprise that had driven the blood from Agnes's delicate cheeks, had crimsoned those of the ruddy Martha), signed next.

"Now, you," said Lionel.

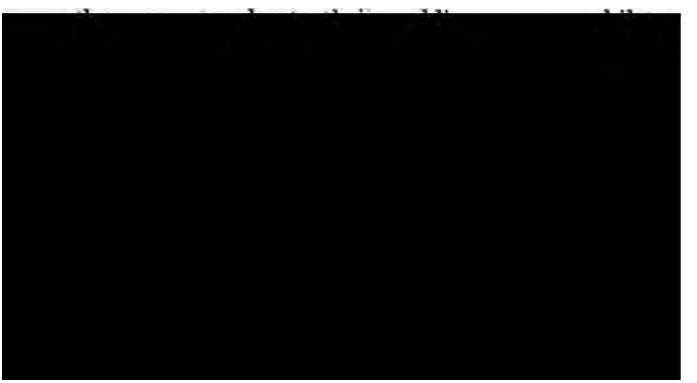
"I can't write," said Gibby; "I can make my mark."

"Very well—that'll do," and "John Gibson, his mark," was next inscribed.

The Minister then having, at the desire of Lionel,

but evidently not with very good will, signed also, the bridegroom wished him good night; and taking his bride under his arm, walked away, followed by Martha and Gibby. As soon as they were gone, the person who had concealed himself behind the press advanced, and observing to the clergyman that Agnes was "a devilish pretty creature!" he also attached his name to the certificate; and folding up the paper, placed it in his pocket. They then quitted the chapel, arm-in-arm, closing the door after them; whilst the bride and bridegroom made their way across the fields to the farm-house from which she had started, preceded by Gibby and Martha, who hastened forward to open the door, light the candles, and stir the fire.

A frugal repast of bread and butter, cake, eggs and cream, was soon spread upon the little table in the parlour by the neat-handed Martha; and there



followed this union, so inauspiciously consecrated, it is necessary to know some that preceded it, we must beg our readers to return with us to the period when the young bride and bridegroom were children; the one residing at Ravenscliffe Castle, as the cherished heir of the Grosvenors; and the other at the Holmes Farm, tenanted by her father, Daniel Crawfurd.

CHAPTER II.

On a bright sunny morning, in the month of June, two little girls were playing on a small grass-plot, in the front of a farm-house, in one of the most romantic parts of England. They were dressed in dark-cotton frocks and brown pinafores of the commonest description; but their clothes and their faces were clean, and their hands no otherwise discoloured than by the wholesome soil of the garden.



into an adjoining field, and paid no attention to her mother's warning.

"Martha, come in, and fetch your sister's bonnet, and take it to her," said the mother.

Whereupon, Martha laid down the little wooden rake, with which she was smoothing a corner of the garden which she called her own, and obeyed her mother's behest. By the time she returned with the bonnet, however, Agnes had re-entered the gate, and had taken possession of Martha's rake.

"Where's my ball?" inquired the latter, as she placed the bonnet on her sister's head, whilst her own remained uncovered.

"That's not my bonnet," said Agnes.

"No, it's mine; I can't find yours," answered Martha. "But where's my ball?"

"I threw it into the field, and I don't know where it's gone to," replied Agnes.

"Then I want my rake," said Martha.

But Agnes was endeavouring to dig up a large stone with the teeth of the rake, and in her efforts, the stick snapt in two.

The colour rose into Martha's cheeks, and the tears into her eyes, as she exclaimed:

"There now, Agnes; you have broke my rake."

"I could not help it," returned Agnes, care-

lessly; but when she saw Martha take up her pinafore to wipe away the tears that were coursing each other down her chubby, good-natured face, the little heart was touched; and saying, "Never mind, Martha; I'll lend you mine," she ran to the passage where her own rake was hanging against the wall, and handed it to her sister; a proceeding to which Martha was so sensible, that, before she began to use the utensil, she flung her fat arms round Agnes's neck, and kissed her.

But Agnes was now thrown out of employment; her own ball she had mislaid, Martha's she had flung into the field, and, in a momentary fit of remorse, she had parted with her rake—a combination of misfortunes altogether too great for her

"Ha! Gibby!" exclaimed Agnes, jumping up and running towards him, "have you seen my ball?"

"No, I haint," said Gibby; "have you lost it?"

"I had it yesterday playing in the orchard," answered Agnes; "but I can't think where it went to; and I have thrown Martha's over the paling into the field, and I can't find it."

"I'll look for it by and by, when I have done my work," said Gibby. "I've got a message from the Abbey, for misses," added he. "I've been up with a sack of taters, and I saw Mrs. Meadows, and they're going to have strawberries and cream up there to-morrow; and she's asked you and your sister to go."

Agnes waited to hear no more, but with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes, away she flew to tell her mother, the good news, whilst Gibby proceeded to impart his intelligence to Martha, who apparently listened to it with more surprise than pleasure; at all events, she made no remark, but having stood for a few moments in silence, as if meditating on what she had heard, she resumed her work, and recommenced raking her garden as assiduously as before the interruption.

In the meantime, Gibby proceeded to the house, where he found Mrs. Crawford already in the pas-

sage, enticed down stairs by Agnes to hear what he had to say.

"An't we to go to the Castle, Gibby?" cried Agnes eagerly.

"Mrs. Meadows sends her compliments," said Gibby, "and says as how there's to be strawberries and cream to-morrow for all the servants; and there's to be a dance afterwards on the lawn; and she wants the misses to go!"

"Shall I wear my white frock, mother?" inquired Agnes.

"I'm afraid it's too short," said Mrs. Crawfurd; "you've grown a great deal since you wore it."

Agnes looked rather grave at this intimation; but her mother, proposing to decide the momentous ques-

attire at all. Nor did she evince any mortification, when, on the following evening, she and her sister started for the Castle, under the protection of John Gibson, to see herself dressed in a spotted cotton frock, whilst Agnes was attired in white muslin. John walked between them, holding a hand of each, tending them with the care rather of a brother than a servant, helping Martha to mount the stiles, lifting Agnes over them, and setting her down upon her two tiny feet with a glad playfulness, as if he revelled in the comparison betwixt his own robust frame and the light fragile form that he swung in the air as easily as if it had been stuffed with eider down.

Whilst Agnes chatted away in a flutter of excitement at the prospect of the gaiety that awaited her, and elated by the agreeable consciousness of her white frock, Martha walked steadily on the other side, divided betwixt pleasure and timidity; not that she was morally timid, or even shy, but she was humble. The servants at the great house, specimens of whom occasionally visited the farm for one purpose or another, were enveloped in a sort of mysterious grandeur to both of them, but whilst Agnes felt no misgivings with respect to her introduction to these sublime people, Martha had somewhat the

sensations of a young lady going to her first drawing-room. But by no means thrown off her equilibrium, she remained calm and quiet; nor was she in the least embarrassed when being delivered by John Gibson into the care and guidance of the dairy-maid, they were conducted into the awful presence of Mrs. Meadows, in her own particular sanctorium.

"Farmer Crawfurd's children, Ma'am," said Lizzy, as she opened the door.

"Come in, my dears," said Mrs. Meadows, who, assisted by the still-room maid, was filling sundry vessels with strawberries, cream and sugar, preparatory to the coming feast. "Sit down, there's good children," said she, scarcely looking at them, and

asking her little visitors if they liked strawberries, and such like easy questions for beginners.

The next stage in the proceedings, Lizzy having announced that all was ready, was to adjourn to the servants' hall, where the whole establishment was assembled. Mrs. Meadows placed herself at the head of the table, Mr. Wighting, the butler, seated himself at the foot, and the feast commenced. There was not much conversation; strawberries are very pleasant things to eat, but they do not make people merry; a stray observation from a smart footman, or a giggle from one of the maids was all that was heard, and even these manifestations were a good deal restrained by the dignified presence of the upper-servants, who were quite *blasés* with regard to strawberries and cream, and who had too nice a sense of their own importance to be lively. The only person to whom Agnes found herself an object of any interest, was an æsthetic lady's maid, who, struck by the child's beauty and innate grace, paid her considerable attention. When the feast was over, the whole party adjourned to the lawn in front of the house, where the village band was already performing for the entertainment of the young people of the family, who, with several visitors of their own age, where assembled in the verandah.

Whilst the servants danced, Martha and Agnes sat upon the grass watching the scene with considerable interest; Agnes's curiosity, in the meanwhile, being not a little awakened by the glimpses that reached her through the festoons of scarlet and white creepers that partly shaded them from her view, of sundry flounced white frocks, adorned by pink and blue sashes, and sleeves looped up with ribbons to match.

Presently this young party was joined by some elder persons, and after a short conference, it was announced that the young ladies and gentlemen were going to make up a dancing party of their own, whereupon they descended the steps and ranged

"She looks a very nice little girl. I mean the little girl in the white frock."

"I dare say she cannot dance, my dear," replied Lady Grosvenor. "Meadows," said she, addressing the housekeeper, "whose children are those?" and as she spoke, she took up her glass to survey them.

"They are Farmer Crawfurd's children, my Lady," answered Meadows, "I just asked them to eat a few strawberries, poor things."

"Very right," said Lady Grosvenor, "bring them here, Meadows." But before the housekeeper had time to obey, Louisa had dragged the now somewhat abashed, but not unwilling Agnes to the verandah.

"Look, mamma, isn't she a pretty little girl? And only think, she's called Agnes. Isn't it a pretty name?"

"A pretty creature, indeed!" remarked the Hon. Mrs. Leslie.

"What fairy feet," exclaimed Lady Minevar.

"And can you dance, Agnes?" inquired Lady Grosvenor.

"I don't know," answered Agnes, hanging down her head, and biting the tips of her rosy fingers.

"I'm certain she could, mamma," said Louisa,

"we could teach her the figure, and Lionel can't dance without a partner."

"Well you can try if you like," said Lady Grosvenor; whereupon Louisa conducted Agnes to the spot where the other children were awaiting this decision, and putting her hand into that of her brother Lionel, she told her that he was her partner, and that they would instruct her what to do; and then the music struck up, and the quadrille commenced: of course Agnes had to be pushed about from place to place, and it was not easy at first to steer her through a *demie queue de chat*, or *chaîne des dames*; but when Lionel took her two hands and whirled her round, and when they danced the *ronde* of the *finale*, Agnes directed by her good ear, yield-

"Oh! you should have Mr. Le Mesurier, that teaches us," said he. "He is a capital master. I suppose you don't know how to waltz?"

"No!" answered Agnes, who had never even heard the word.

"It's such fun!" said Lionel, "going round and round; and at first it made us so giddy, that we all fell down on the top of one another!"—this striking Agnes as eminently comical, she burst into a merry laugh! "I think you're a very nice little girl!" said he; "and I like you better than Georgina Minevar;—do you know her?"

"No!" answered Agnes.

"She's so cross and affected!" he continued; "we none of us like her much. But it is a pity you can't dance! What's your name?"

"Agnes Crawfurd?"

"Don't you think Agnes Crawfurd should have lessons of M. Le Mesurier?" asked Lionel of Louisa, who now called upon the young party to form another quadrille. Louisa did think so; and whilst she arranged the set, she determined to ask her mamma to allow Agnes to be present at the dancing lessons. "You know, mamma," said she, "we are always wanting somebody in Georgina's place, because she has so often got a pain some-

... Chapperlier the
on the subject. In the meanwhile, .
proving rapidly in the art of ste
through the mazes of the dance, whi
the same time, making considerable
estimation of her new companions,
into the house to show her their p
give her a ride on the rocking-horse
sented her with a somewhat faded bea
doll, Lionel gave her the surviv
of an old Noah's Ark; and even
cared less about her, contributed a
shoes. Then they led her into the d
where they gave her cakes, and asked
she was not *a nice little girl*, till, wit
flushed with pleasure, she was comf
care of John the footman, who receiv
conduct her to Mrs. Meadows's sancto

CHAPTER III.

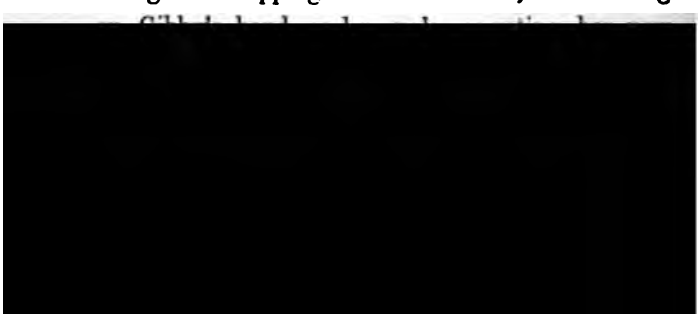
During the progress of these little events, Martha had remained where she was first placed, very much overlooked and forgotten, till Mrs. Meadows, fancying the dew was beginning to fall, thought it advisable to re-enter the house. Then she took the child by the hand, and led her away.

"Your sister is gone in with the young ladies," said she; "you shall go with me, and wait till they send her down."

So when Agnes arrived, she found Martha sitting on the edge of a chair, and munching a piece of cake. Although Agnes had a good deal overcome her awe of the flounced frocks and broad sashes above stairs, and before they parted had become tolerably familiarized with the young people, there

was something in the cold, rigid atmosphere of Mrs. Meadows and her apartment that suppressed her natural confidence; so that, after being complimented on her new acquisitions, and interrogated as to whether she had had a ride on the rocking-horse, she edged herself on a corner of Martha's chair, stealthily exhibiting her toys, and heartily wishing for Gibby to take her home.

As the period had arrived at which Mrs. Meadows was wont to take her early bit of supper, her wishes were so far in unison with those of Agnes, that she rang for Lizzy to inquire if nobody was coming from the Farm to fetch the children; since, if not, she (Lizzy) would have to escort them thither herself; whereupon it appeared that John Gibson had been waiting some time, and was now, at these presents, taking a glass of beer in the hall. So the children were dismissed with a good bye, and a slice of cake to carry home with them; and Agnes was soon lilting and skipping across the fields, as she hung



had seen; but as these were unattainable luxuries, and she saw nothing at home to quicken the desire, it died away as the recollection of the evening at the great house faded; and Agnes was as happy as ever with her rake, and her spade, and her brown pinafore, and Gibby for a confidant and ally, when an unexpected invitation to join the dancing-lesson at the Castle, threw her again into a flutter of childish vanity.

As good or ill-luck would have it, Georgina Minevar, who, as Louisa Grosvenor had observed, always had a pain somewhere, having failed to attend the dancing-lesson and thereby spoilt the quadrille on two consecutive Thursdays whilst the image of the pretty little girl at the Farm was fresh in the minds of the children, they renewed their request that she might be permitted to join the class. So Madame Charpentier making no objection, Agnes received notice to appear on the following morning at twelve o'clock. The white frock was again in requisition, and the desire for the flounce and sash revived in more than its original intensity, insomuch, that the mortification of not possessing them, not only considerably abated the excitement of her expectations, but even diminished her confidence, and subdued her gaiety among the other

young people. Then they all danced in gloves, and it was discovered she had none; a deficiency, however, which was easily supplied from the nursery wardrobe. As she had not forgotten what she learnt the first evening, she got through the figures better than might be expected; and as dancing-masters are apt to have a quick eye for juvenile beauty and grace, Mr. Le Mesurier took a great fancy to her; and lamenting that she should not know the rudiments of his art, without which, he observed, in spite of her good ear, she never would dance well, he offered, if it would be agreeable to Lady Grosvenor, to let her join free of expense, a class he held weekly in the neighbouring town; and Mrs. Crawfurd, being recommended to take advantage of this desirable opportunity, consented from a double motive; first, because she did not think it becoming or prudent, or grateful in her, to decline the proposal; and next, because it fell in with and flattered her besetting weakness, which was an extravagant admi-



family wardrobe; for her bonnet the bit of pink ribbon extracted from the odds and ends hoarded in the corner drawer. As, though poor, the faint halo of better circumstances lingered around Mrs. Crawfurd, she always endeavoured to keep both her children clean and tidy, yet it was with a difference. Martha's hair was combed, but Agnes's was curled. It is true her mother said, that Martha's locks were very untractable; but perhaps, if they had had the early training that had been bestowed on Agnes's, they would have been less so. Then Agnes's complexion was so delicate that it was necessary to shield it carefully from the sun; whilst Martha's, having been neglected in the beginning, was not thought worth attending to afterwards. Being as brown as a berrry already, it was of no consequence whether she played in the garden with a bonnet or without one; and thus Agnes had the benefit of two bonnets, Martha's and her own; so that if one was not to be found when she ran out of doors, the chances were that the other was. And this unconscious favouritism running through everything, of course produced its effects; not *creating* probably, for had their characters been reversed, no system could have made them individually what they were in mind, any more than in person—but *aiding*

nature; and whilst the effects of exercise and air on Agnes, to whom that universal mother, (whom we have tampered with and corrupted till her partialities and caprices re-act on us to our perplexity and destruction,) had given a silky skin and sylph-like form, only added roses to her lilies, and grace and pliancy to her limbs, Martha, who came into the world clothed with an ordinary work-a-day integument, and a frame rather remarkable for solidity than symmetry, grew browner and sturdier every day; and whilst the seeds of ambition, the love of refinement, and a tendency to discontent with her humble condition, which that same erring mother had implanted in that pretty

appearing to be only the natural result of circumstances, awakened no bad passions and did her no harm.

Mrs. Crawfurd often remarked as she looked at them, what a strange difference there was betwixt the children; but it was chiefly the external variety that struck her; she was not capable of penetrating deeply into the nature of either of them. Accustomed as she was, however, to think things fit and necessary for her youngest girl, which it did not occur to her to bestow on the elder, yet when these dancing-lessons were proposed, her maternal affection prompted her to ask herself, wherefore if Agnes had lessons, Martha should have none; and as no legitimate objection presented itself, except the expense, she proposed to her husband that the latter should, at all events have the benefit of a quarter's teaching at Mr. Le Mesurier's class; and the fee to be paid being small, and both feeling the incongruity of one child receiving this sort of instruction when it was withheld from the other, the decision was in Martha's favour.

And perhaps, had she been taught *con amore*, as her sister was, she might have made something of it; but her cotton frock and stumpy figure inspiring M. Le Mesurier with immeasurable contempt, he

delivered his instructions with a sort of *de-haut-en-bas* jeering insolence, that would have been sufficient to repress the genius of Taglioni herself; the natural result of which procedure was, that Martha detested both him and his art, and not only learned very little, but made all the haste in the world, when the quarter was expired, to forget whatever she had acquired.

In the same space of time, Agnes had made so much progress, that she could now take her part in the quadrille as well as her new acquaintance at the Castle; whilst M. Le Mesurier did not fail, when he commended her quickness and aptitude, to expatiate on the stupidity and *gaucherie* of her

occasionally admitted into the dancing-room, were heard to inquire if that pretty elegant creature, with the dark-blue ribbons, was not Lady Harriet Harrowby's youngest daughter?

Then she was an enormous favourite with Lionel, her first partner, who always sulked when he was obliged to dance with anybody else; and but for the authority of M. Le Mesurier and Madame Charpentier, Georgina Minevar would have been quite thrown out of the quadrille, when she happened to be present, which at first was seldom; but when she saw the consequence of her staying away, she changed her tactics, laid aside her pains and her indolence, and attended pretty regularly; and then there arose an open and unconcealed enmity on her part towards Agnes, and a less demonstrative one, on the part of Agnes, towards her. Georgina was the eldest of the party, though backward from a morbid inertness of temperament; and she would never have troubled herself to bestow a thought on the little plebeian, if the little plebeian had not been, as she considered, lifted out of her place, and raised into a sort of competition with herself. As it was, she treated her with all the insolence of a fine lady of thirteen, which Agnes was acute enough to see, but which, child as she

was, she was at first indifferent to; but as she grew older, and more familiar with the other young people, her confidence increased, and her sensibilities were quickened, till it was not easy to suppress her sentiments, or conceal the feelings of aversion with which she reciprocated Georgina's dislike, especially as she had all the young dancers on her side. Accordingly, she began to show fight, rendered affront for affront, and scorn for scorn.

Georgina had originally opened the campaign, by refusing to give her hand to Agnes in the dance, or to recognise her as a *vis-à-vis;* Agnes now returned the compliment. Then Georgina had a habit of flopping herself down on a form, where there was not space enough, for the purpose of pushing Agnes out of her seat. Formerly, Agnes rose, and sought another; now she sat fast.

"Why don't you get up and make room?" said Georgïna, sharply.

"There's plenty more seats," said Agnes, whose



firmly in her place, whilst the roses in her cheeks grew deeper; but Georgina was the biggest, and, strong in her impudence, she wedged herself in, till she pushed Agnes off the end of the form. Perhaps Agnes need not have fallen to the ground, but she did.

"Que faites-vous là donc, Mesdemoiselles?" inquired Madame Charpentier, looking up from her embroidery-frame.

"Cette petite fille ne veut pas faire place, Madame," said Georgina.

"Comment donc, Mademoiselle?" said Madame Charpentier to Agnes, who was standing at the end of the form and crying, not because she was hurt, but to make her case, and because she was conquered.

The attention of the other children being now called to the squabble, it was easy to see to which side their sympathies inclined; but Madame Charpentier took another view of the matter; for, having first gently reproved Georgina in French, for endeavouring to force herself into a seat where there was no vacancy; adding a hint, that it was beneath her to enter into contention with *cette pauvre petite fille;* she next called up Agnes, and gave her what she considered a necessary and profitable lecture on the duties of not forgetting her station, or

permitting herself to imagine, that because Lady Grosvenor was so kind as to allow her to associate with her daughters, that she was therefore their equal. On the contrary, she endeavoured to impress on her, that it was her part to give way on every occasion, and that any endeavour to assert what she might consider her rights was black ingratitude.

"I am surprised you do not know your place better," said she.

"It was my place, Ma'am," answered Agnes.

"Ce n'est pas ça, Mademoiselle," said Madame Charpentier, who though she had been married to a Frenchman, was by birth English; "you should

making no movement to return to her seat, but rather as who should say, "Go on; if you have anything more to say, I am ready to hear it."

"You may sit down now," said Madame Charpentier, getting irritated at the demeanour of the child, and the consciousness that her little pupils were against her. "Perhaps Miss Minevar will allow you to sit at the end of that form."

"Come here," whispered Louisa, "and sit between me and Lyley!"

"Never mind her, nasty old toad!" said Lyley himself. "I hate her!"

The effect of this injudicious style of reproof on the young person it was addressed to may be imagined. Together with a sense of injury, there was awakened in her mind a painful consciousness of her position in regard to her companions; and the germ of a desire to rise out of it was now first stirred in her breast. Evil passions, though innate, may slumber; and it is ill-treatment, injustice, or bad management, that, like the hot sun to the serpent's egg, first awakens them to life and motion. When the reign of charity and good-will shall arrive, these germs of ill will languish and shrink like seeds sown in an impervious shade; and men may live and die without discovering that under

due provocation they could be malignant, envious, and ambitious; till, in course of time, as where there is no motion there is no life, the kind will die out, the species will become extinct, and then will be the triumph of perfect love on earth.

In the meantime, Agnes Crawfurd was a sufferer from being born at a period considerably antecedent to that blessed one which none of us, however we may pray for it and believe in it, shall live to see; and from having no care to disturb her more weighty than what concerned her little personal vanities, as frocks and flounces, sashes and shoes, she began to be susceptible, uneasy, and anxious to avoid being seen in what she now felt as degrading

M. Le Mesurier, desirous of extending his fame, proposed to give a *matinée dansante*, to which all his pupils in the neighbourhood, with their relations and friends, were invited. The hour appointed for the meeting was noon; and the place, the assembly-room of the neighbouring town; but unfortunately, when the morning came, the rain poured down in torrents. The distance was so short, that Agnes had formerly gone there to receive M. Le Mesurier's gratuitous lessons on foot, when the weather was fine, and had been very glad to avail herself of the cart and John Gibson's services when it was wet; but her eyes were opened now, and she could not bear the thoughts of being seen by her aristocratic acquaintance in so plebeian a conveyance. Still, there was no choice but to go in it or stay at home, and relinquish the successes that awaited her—certain successes, for she was not only the best dancer and the prettiest girl of the party, but she was the favourite of the dancing-master, who, looking upon her as the work of his own hands and the triumph of his art, lost no opportunity of putting her forward and exhibiting her in the most advantageous situations.

"I don't like to go in the cart, mother," she

said, colouring at the disclosure of her secret feelings. "I wish it didn't rain so."

"Perhaps it may clear yet," said Mrs. Crawfurd. "See how nice your frock looks; I hope you won't tumble it."

And it did look very nice, being a new one sent her for the occasion by Lady Grosvenor, together with shoes and ribbands.

"I could change my shoes and stockings in the cloak-room, if I could keep my frock dry," said Agnes.

"It is impossible for you to walk; you would be wet through and through before you get there," answered her mother.

"Gibby," said she, you're not to drive up to the 'Eagle,' but to set me down opposite the Wright's, and then I'll walk the rest."

"What! in all this here rain?" said John. "Why, you'll be soaking before you get's to the 'Eagle;' na! na! I'll not do that."

"But you must, Gibby, I am determined to get out," said Agnes.

"What for?" said he, "when we can drive smack up to the door."

"Because I hate the cart," said Agnes, pettishly.

"Hate the cart!" echoed he, astonished. "Why what's the matter with her? We never carries nought in her but wood, and garden-stuff, and such like."

"I don't care; I won't drive up to the 'Eagle' in it, and I will get out."

"Oh! well if you will, you must," said John; and accordingly, at the entrance of the town, Agnes descended and started on her way, wrapped in her mother's cloak, and armed with an umbrella. It still rained hard, but as she hadn't far to go, she might have succeeded in reaching the inn with no more damage than a splash or two, had she not, as ill luck would have it, fallen into the mud in her

haste to get out of the way of a gig that came suddenly round the corner as she was crossing the street. The cloak being too long, tripped her up, and down she came, exactly opposite the windows of the assembly-room, where many of the young people were already congregated. The laugh that almost invariably greets any unlucky christian who thus involuntarily salutes his mother-earth, echoed from the merry group, till Louisa Grosvenor exclaimed:

"Oh! it's our poor Agnes, I declare! What a pity! She will not be able to dance!"

"Only look at her. How very provoking!" said Frances. "We should have brought her with us. It will certainly spoil our quadrille."

the window, as she arose from the ground, and her pride restrained her tears.

"Oh, Agnes, what a pity!" cried Louisa, who, with her governess and sister, had made her way to the scene of these operations.

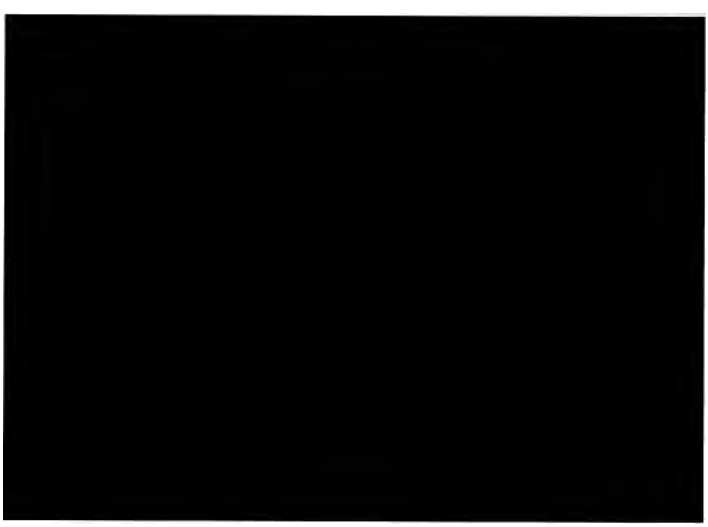
"How came you to be on foot in all this rain?" inquired Madame Charpentier. "Why didn't your father send you in the cart?"

"How vexed M. Le Mesurier will be?" said Frances; "for there's nobody can do the new figure but you, so we shan't be able to dance it at all."

"If you think it would do, Ma'am, I could lend her a frock of my little girl's," said the hostess. "Perhaps it may be a little short, but I'm sure she might wear it."

Which offer being eagerly accepted by the young ladies, and the face and hands restored to their original hue, the wardrobe of Miss Simmons was turned out, and the most promising articles selected to supply the place of the flounced frock, and blue shoes, and thread stockings, which had been the pride of the owner. But, alas! with them went the confidence, and consequently the good dancing and the graceful demeanour. Where is the daughter of Eve that could hold up her head, firmly point her toe, or gracefully throw back her shoulders,

knowing herself to be ill-dressed? Agnes could not. She not only made no sensation, but she failed entirely in her part of the pageant, and had to suffer, besides her own mortification, the additional pain of seeing it reflected in the face of her indulgent and partial teacher.



CHAPTER IV.

THE evening sun shone faintly into an upper window of the Holmes Farm, casting a pale glow upon the wan cheek of a dying woman.

"Leave it! leave it!" she said to one who would have drawn the curtain across the window. "I shall never see the sun set again!"

Then having prayed for some time, she called her two daughters to her bedside, and calmly saying she was going to leave them, she proceeded to give them her instructions for their future guidance.

"Above all things, love one another, and make your poor father as comfortable as you can. You, Martha, are the eldest, and you must take charge of the household affairs. You are young, my poor

child, to have so much care cast on your shoulders; but God's will be done! It *is* a care, and a heavy one, to provide for a family out of such small means, but with strict economy it may be managed; we have always contrived to keep want—actual want—from our door. A joint twice a week—you must not go beyond that; the other days you must make up with dumplings and vegetables. Sometimes you may get a bit of fish cheap, especially in summer, when Dawkins is anxious to get it off his hands; but never appear eager to have it, for he is apt to overcharge, if he can. Remember, your father likes a plain plum dumpling on Sundays—that's in winter, I mean. In summer, of course you'll give him fresh

a bit of bacon flavours it very well; and be sure to thicken it well with barley, and put in some suet dumplings. Of course you'll bake twice a week; and take care not to cut the bread too soon; nothing makes so much waste as cutting new bread. When fruit's in season, you can sometimes give your father a pie on baking-days—a raspberry-and-currant pie, with a little sweet milk, was always a great treat to him, poor man! And that puts me in mind of the cow: take the greatest care of her, Martha; you you know how much of your comfort will depend on her. If sugar wasn't so dear, you might boil down fruit enough to last you all the winter; but you mustn't attempt that, unless it should come down in price. The thing I am most uneasy about is the cider; your father's so fond of his glass of cider; and I'm afraid, when I'm gone, you'll never be able to manage it."

"Can't Gibby do it?" inquired the distressed and bewildered Martha.

"Gibby has always made it under my directions," replied the mother; "but when I am not here to look after him, I don't know that you can depend upon his doing it right. Then there's the house-linen—"

"I'm sure, mother, you're talking too much,"

said Martha; "you know the doctor said you were not to talk."

"It doesn't signify whether I talk or not," replied the mother; "it won't make three hours' difference, and your poor father's comforts must be thought of. Some of the sheets want turning. I was in hopes I should have been able to do it before I was called away; but it's not to be; God's will be done! But you'll look over the linen, Martha, and see what wants turning, as soon as I am laid in the earth, and out of the way."

"Yes, mother," sobbed Martha, overcome by this said image. "There's your father's shirts too; they'll go very well another year without wanting much if they're well looked to; but by that time

you mustn't give more—white sugar's too dear, except for your father; he must have a little—and—and—don't forget, when the mulberries are ripe, to give him mulberry pie as long as they last—there's nothing he's so fond of as—as—mulberry—"

"Mother! mother! what's the matter? Oh! Agnes, fetch father! Shall Gibby fetch the doctor, father? Mother's worse. Oh, see! see! what's that?"

"The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away!" cried Mr. Crawfurd, falling on his knees by the bedside, whilst Agnes and Martha, who had not been aware their mother was so near her end, and scarcely comprehended what had occurred, imitated the action. For some minutes no word was spoken; the anxious wife, eased of her cares, lay still and calm; the children, frightened and awed, scarce breathed, and nothing was heard but the deep sobs that convulsed the big heart of the man. Presently he arose, and flinging a last look at the faithful partner of many joys and sorrows, he took his two daughters by the hand, and led them from the room. A neighbour was then summoned to perform the last sad offices for the departed wife; and having thus recorded how Mrs. Agnes Crawfurd died, we

will proceed to give some account of how she had lived.

She had been a beauty, and it was from her that Agnes had inherited the fluent form, the well-turned limbs, and the lovely features. To a poor, but virtuous girl, who earned her livelihood by making straw bonnets, Mr. Crawfurd, the linen-draper, with a well-frequented shop, was a great match; and for a few years after her marriage, her life would have been very prosperous and very happy, had she not suffered from continual ill health, and the loss of every child that was born to her; till the doctors pronounced that her only chance of recovery was a total change in her way of life. She must go to

thought that, like reading and writing, farming "came by nature;" and amongst the hundreds of persons ruined by this mistake, was poor Daniel Crawfurd.

He started gallantly, with his sheep and his oxen, his ploughs and his harrows, and his men-servants and his maid-servants; had his fancy cows and pretty dairy, and a team that any farmer might have been proud of. They all lived on the fat of the land, Mrs. Crawfurd recovered her health and her beauty, and, for the first two or three years, everything looked bright. But then the want of experience and of the knowing eye to supervise the underlings, began to tell against the master. The seasons, of course, were bad, and prices ruinous; and Mr. Crawfurd began to sing the farmer's *jéréміade* to the old tune. Their two little girls, too, were born by this time, to add to their anxieties; and as matters grew worse and worse, Mr. Crawfurd, unequal to cope with the difficulties that were gathering around him, took to studying Moore's Almanack, and fell into despondency. At the same time, whether from inquietude of mind, or because there was some original flaw in her constitution, Mrs. Crawfurd's ill health returned; and after languishing on for a few years, she finally

sank without any evident cause, but rather appearing to die because she could not be troubled to live any longer.

This event, however, did not occur till Martha was sixteen years of age and her sister one year younger; each continuing to retain the peculiarities by which nature had first distinguished them: Martha, who had taken after her father, with her sunburnt complexion, stumpy figure, and round, good-natured face; Agnes, inheriting more than the beauty of her mother, with the addition of a gait and carriage that might have adorned a coronet. Previous to this period the dancing-lessons, and with them the intimacy at the Castle, had been discontinued:

aristocratic young head would be seen peeping between the red silk curtains of a well-lined pew, at the farmer's lovely daughter. Now and then, some further manifestation was attempted from those quarters; but as Agnes gave no encouragement to her admirers, by either look or word, and as on the whole it was a moral and well-conducted little neighbourhood, those advances rarely amounted to anything offensive. The only attentions Agnes countenanced, were those of her old friend and ally John Gibson, commonly called Gibby, who was utterly devoted to her, and indeed in love with her, after his own manner; but although she had never checked their early familiarity, her beauty and refinement, and his natural reverence, raised an invisible barrier betwixt them, sacred to him as *the divinity which doth hedge a queen.*

The key to Agnes's conduct, however, as regarded her admirers, aristocratic or otherwise, was not so much to be sought for in her prudence as her pride. She really had an affection for her early friend and ever-devoted slave, who in her infancy spent all his leisure in carving her rude toys with the clasp-knife with which he cut his bread and cheese, and now, in her girlish womanhood, would gladly, in default of a cloak, not only have spread his jerkin, but

himself in the gutter, to enable her to cross it dry-shod. She was grateful to him; and she liked him both from habit, and because he was really a likeable creature; and as he was quite out of the category of lovers, she never placed any restraint on the natural manifestations of her good-will. But the pride and ambition which had been fostered by her early associations, defended her both from the addresses of her equals or the designs of her superiors.

Of the perils of the latter, her mother, who in her own youthful days had had some experience, had carefully warned her; against the former she was self-armed. She had too much pride, and too little passion, to be in danger of exposing herself to the

sister, forming no acquaintances nor seeking any amusements, because she had access to none but low ones.

The fastidiousness of her taste recoiled from the merriment of a fair, or the jollities of a hop amongst what appeared to her but hinds and clod-hoppers; and the humour and fun which might have diverted her aristocratic friends, who were raised above the perils of pollution, she felt herself too near to enjoy.

CHAPTER V.

When Mrs. Crawfurd died, the attention of the family at Ravenscliffe was recalled to Agnes.

"I wonder what poor Agnes will do, mamma?"

so," replied Louisa; "and she told me herself that her father was quite melancholy, and scarcely ever opened his lips to anybody; so that it must be dreadfully dull for her. I wonder what Agnes would be fit for?"

"She would make a very good lady's-maid," said Frances; "she has taste, and would soon acquire style."

"So she would," said Louisa; "and besides, she has such good manners, and she dresses her own hair beautifully already; but then she should have lessons from Florimel, and be placed with somebody to learn dress-making and millinery; and perhaps her father couldn't pay for her teaching. I wonder if Bennett would give her a little instruction. Do you think she would, mamma?"

"I dare say she would," said Lady Grosvenor, without raising her eyes from her book.

"May we ask her, mamma?" continued Louisa.

"Yes, yes, my dear," answered her Ladyship, somewhat impatiently; "but don't trouble me about it now."

And, in pursuance of this plan of Louisa's, before many days had elapsed, Agnes was installed at Ravenscliffe as the pupil and assistant of Mrs. Bennett; a situation on which she entered with

mingled feelings of pleasure and mortification. She was fond of the young people, who had always been so kind to her; and she liked to live in a fine house, and see fine things and fine people, and to be busying her fingers with ribbons, and gauzes, and artificial flowers, instead of her father's worsted socks and dairy-pans; but, on the other hand, she felt, that although she was *amongst* these fine people, she was not *of* them; and that from having been, in a manner, the companion and playmate of the young ladies and their friends, she had now descended to her true position as their servant, and the companion of servants. This galled her pride, and inspired a disposition to keep

macy, and who were neither able to treat her as a menial, nor desirous of doing so. On the contrary, they were very fond of a chat with Agnes over the dressing-room fire. She became the confidante of all their likings and dislikings; and grew acquainted with the ridicules and absurdities of all their visitors, who were so unfortunate as to have any sufficiently prominent to attract notice. On the other hand, there was a disposition, on the part of the servants (that is, the women), to treat the new-comer with their full measure of equality; they spared her the less, that the men spared her so much. To the latter, her beauty was her state; she took rank upon it, and it stood her instead of any other. Even Mrs. Meadows, her first patroness, and the unforeseeing originator of her present fortunes, called her "a proud minx;" but Mr. Wighting professed his opinion, that being so handsome, it was all the better; adding, sententiously, that "her pride might keep her from a fall."

"Well, Agnes, I have got a bit of news for you," said Louisa, one day; "your old playfellow, Lyley, is coming home to-morrow. I don't think you've seen him since he went to Eton,—have you?"

"No, Ma'am," replied Agnes, who at the commencement of these confabulations always answered with a degree of respect and reserve, which were apt to wear off as the conversation advanced. "Mr. Grosvenor was not here last year, was he?"

"He hasn't been here these two years. We never happened to be here ourselves at the vacation time, you know. You can't think how he is grown, and how handsome he is."

"He was very handsome before he went away," returned Agnes.

"Only papa and mamma were so dreadfully afraid he was to have a snub nose. Think of the representative of all the glories of all the Grosvenors

because he is disagreeable that papa hates him; but because he is the next heir to the estate."

"I thought Mr. Lionel was heir?" said Agnes, with surprise.

"Of course he is; but I mean he would be the heir if there were no Lionel in the case. You know his mother is papa's niece."

"I've often heard my father say what rejoicings there were when Mr. Lionel was born," said Agnes.

"Rejoicings, indeed!" said Louisa. "But before that, and just at the moment that papa was distracted at having two girls instead of a boy, what did the foolish woman do, but write to him and say that since he was now getting into years and to all appearance it was not the will of God that an heir should be born to him, she hoped he would join her in endeavouring to obtain a grant that the title should accompany the estate even though it were to pass out of the right line, and proposing that her son should take the name of Watson Grosvenor; an offence papa has never forgiven, nor ever will."

"Then she must have been greatly disappointed when Mr. Lionel was born, I suppose?" said Agnes.

"Disappointed! I believe she was! Who is that letter from?" continued Louisa, turning towards her sister, to whom a letter had just been delivered.

"From Georgy Minevar," answered Frances.

"Where are they?"

"At Laughton. Lord Minevar is ill there, and they can't get back to Redlands, which is annoying them all very much."

"What's the matter with him?" inquired Louisa.

"They don't seem to know very well what it is; but she says her mamma is very much alarmed."

"He was always a poor sickly boy," said Louisa. "What a fortune his sister will have if he dies."

[redacted]

"Indeed I do," answered Agnes; "and I remember Mr. Lionel could not bear to dance with her because, he said, she smelt like a pill-box."

"He always hated her," said Frances.

"Besides he was in love with Agnes," said Louisa. "You were certainly Lionel's first love, Agnes. I remember his cutting a piece out of Madame Charpentier's ruby velvet dress in order to revenge your wrongs, one day, when she took Georgina's part against you. I wonder if you have forgotten your dancing, Agnes?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," returned Agnes. "I have never danced since."

"But don't people ever dance amongst you? At the farmers' houses, I mean?"

"I believe they do, sometimes; but I never saw them," returned Agnes.

"Why, did you never go to any of their balls?"

"Never," answered Agnes.

"I greatly doubt whether your living so much with us when we were all children was a good thing for you, Agnes. Don't you think it has made you less fit for your own station in life?" said Frances.

"I don't think so at all!" said Louisa. "In

the first place, we don't know what Agnes's station in life may be. She may marry very well."

"What do you call *very well?*" asked Frances.

"Why, I mean she may not always be a servant. She may marry some respectable tradesman—he may be even rich, perhaps; and then whatever she has acquired by associating with us will be of use to her."

"I suspect people are much happier that have no tastes above their stations," said Frances.

"I don't know that," returned Louisa; "but, as I said before, we do not know what Agnes's station is to be."

"Nothing very exalted, I should think, at all

"Of course, I'm not thinking of him for Agnes. I only quoted him to show that there *are* rich tradesmen at Ellerton."

"How would you like to be the second Mrs. Simmons, Agnes?" asked Frances.

"Not at all, Ma'am," said Agnes, with a toss of her pretty head.

"Then, Meadows says that Walters, the grocer, is making a fortune," said Louisa.

"And I do not think he has a wife," said Frances. "Come, there's a husband Louisa has found for you, Agnes. How would you like the portly Mr. Walters?"

"I do not intend to marry at all," said Agnes, drily, as, under pretence of carrying away the bonnets and shawls that had been thrown off, she quitted the room.

"There you see," said Frances, "she's offended at the very idea of a match that another person in her situation would jump at."

"Upon my word, Frances, I differ with you altogether," said Louisa. "You speak as if people in her situation had not their likings and dislikings, as well as we have."

"I don't know whether they have or not,"

answered Frances; "but at all events they cannot afford to indulge them."

"They can remain single, as Agnes proposes to do."

"No doubt; but how many are the maids who would rather remain single than accept the offer of a man who could give them a comfortable home and a secure maintenance?"

"Why, as many as the mistresses that would rather remain single than accept a coronet, I dare say."

"Oh, very likely; but that is not very many, you must admit."

"The best are never the many, Frances. I con-

netcy and a pretty good estate, there was no necessity for troubling himself with much of it. All he had to do henceforth, was to keep a few terms at Oxford, and then go abroad.

"Well, Louisa, and how's mamma? and how's the governor?" asked he.

"They are both very well," answered she. "Papa's gone to a meeting of magistrates at B——, and mamma drove there with him to do some shopping."

"Well, and what's going on here?"

"Nothing. You heard that Jemima Mansell has married Colonel Fenton, at last; and that Sir Abraham Towers is paying his addresses to her sister?"

"By Jove! that will be a famous match for her. They say, when old Towers the banker, dies, he'll leave him everything he has."

"Papa says, that altogether he will not have less than thirty thousand a-year. Well, let me see, what else is there new? Oh! the Wentworths are going to sell Elm Park, and take a place near London."

"What for?"

"*They* say, to educate their children; but some people say, it's because they're done up."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Lionel. "I know Wentworth has been going it hard upon the turf. And is that all the news you have? Is there nobody staying here now?"

"Nobody. The Mastermans were here last week for a couple of days; and oh, by the by, Lyley, we've got your old flame, Agnes Crawfurd, here."

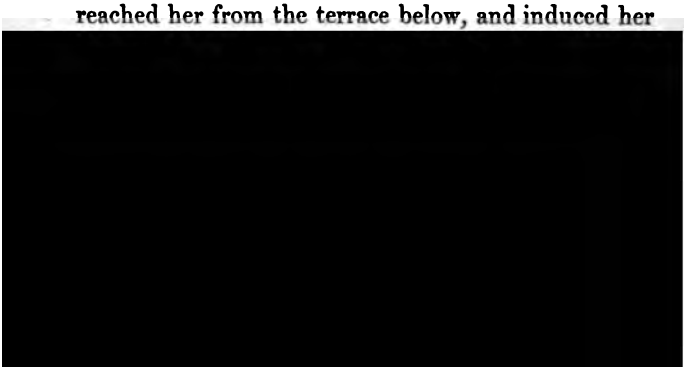
"Poor little Agnes—I remember Agnes. Is she as pretty as ever?"

"I think she is prettier. Her mother died, and so we took her to be under Bennett; and I want to persuade mamma to keep her to wait on us. We must have a second lady's-maid, and I had much

to give a stately, but affectionate reception to this rising star of his house, who was adored by both father and mother; by the former especially, because he looked upon the boy as sent into the world to carry forward the annals of and bear on to posterity that name, which to him was dearer and more sacred than life, and which, but for the birth of this promising scion, would soon have been extinct; for Sir Francis's younger brother, Colonel Grosvenor, had no son, and his only daughter, Letitia, had made a marriage hateful to all her connexions, and was the mother of the much-detested Lewis Watson, alluded to by Louisa, to whom, not the title, but the estate, if for want of an heir it passed out of the right line, would ultimately descend.

CHAPTER VI.

In a large country-house, with two flights of back stairs, it was easy for Lionel and Agnes to live under the same roof for weeks without meeting directly face to face. She often saw *him*, because a certain degree of curiosity about a handsome youth, who had formerly been her friend and playfellow, carried her to the window, when his voice reached her from the terrace below, and induced her



tion on the subject of their meeting, till, one day, Lionel said to his sister, "By Jove! Louey, what a pretty girl Agnes Crawfurd is!"

"Have you only made that discovery now?" answered his sister.

"I never saw her till to-day," he replied; "I met her in the avenue, and she dropt me such a charming courtesy! I recognized her directly."

"She's lovely, *I* think," said Louisa; "I always did think so."

"By Jove! she *is* a beautiful girl, to be sure!" exclaimed he. "I wonder you never told me more about her."

"I told you she was here, and that I wished mamma to keep her to wait on us."

"And will she?"

"I don't know yet, but I hope so. It would be a pity to send such a pretty creature as that unprotected into the world to earn her bread!"

"It would be a confounded shame!" said Lionel.

"Besides," continued Louisa, "I have a regard for Agnes, for old acquaintance sake!"

"So have I," said he.

"Do you remember how jealous Georgy Minevar was of her?"

"Ugly devil!—to be sure I do."

"And how you avenged her wrongs by cutting a piece out of Madame Charpentier's velvet dress?"

"Serve her right, old toady! She was always unjust to Agnes!"

"And is still when she can!" said Louisa.

"But she has nothing to do with her now, has she?"

"Agnes dresses her; mamma desired her to do it!"

"What a shame!" said Lionel. "Charpentier's much more fit to dress Agnes: nasty old cat!"

"I wish, when Agnes is a little older, we could get her well married!" said Louisa; "but here, at Ravenscliffe, nobody that would be a fit match for

day he dined here, he made such *doux yeux* at little Isabel, that papa, who you know hates curates for Aunt Watson's sake, was very near kicking him out of the house. He has only been invited once since, and then she was not permitted to come to table!"

From this period, Lionel set up a little flirtation with Agnes, partly in earnest and partly in jest; which, however, remained altogether on his own side, for she took no part in it; nor made any response, but strictly kept to her place and station, receiving his half-boyish, playful advances to intimacy and equality, not with shyness, not with humility, but with self-possessed, maidenly reserve. Had she studied how most to *agacer* him, which she did not, she could not have done it better. The reserve gave him something to think of, and offered a little difficulty to be overcome, which, though without any ultimate object or design whatever, was sufficient to interest him for its own sake. Agnes had a place in his thoughts—perhaps a larger place than any other individual object, except a new gun, with which his father presented him; and when he went to Oxford, many a bumper of claret was drunk by himself and his companions to the health of Agnes Crawfurd. At his next visit to

Ravenscliffe, he was disappointed to find Agnes absent. "Where is she gone?" he inquired.

"Home to her father," answered Louisa, "because she would not wait on Charpentier!"

"Quite right," said he.

"I don't think so," returned Louisa. "She has lost an excellent opportunity of getting on under Bennett's instructions, and as Isabel is nearly finished, Charpentier will be soon away; but the truth is—although I believe she would have staid with us, because we never treated her as a servant, nor considered her as one—that she disliked the situation. Poor Agnes is too proud for her fortunes, and I really do not see what she is to do."



window-seat. It was a humble home, but there was nothing coarse or vulgar about it—nothing to shock the taste of the young Oxonian; on the contrary, there was a modest propriety, a decent grace, that lent the cue to fancy, and opened the door to romance.

No servant now, but a lady of God's own making, in adversity, or one whom blindest fortune had misplaced; and these environments gave a new tone to his feelings. It was not merely the presence of his sister that altered his demeanour—it was an involuntary respect, mingled with something approaching to tenderness, that repressed his former gay badinage, and tuned his voice to another key. He did not say much, nor Agnes neither; but she felt the change, and was pleased at it; whilst Louisa, who was a great talker, and generally more alive than her neighbours, had all the discourse to herself.

"And what do you mean to do, Agnes?" she inquired.

"I don't know," said Agnes, blushing.

She would have liked to add, "Not be a servant, certainly;" but she feared it might appear ungrateful, and forbore; whilst Lionel almost blushed at so indelicate a question, and felt displeased with his

sister for putting it. What *should* she do, but braid her hair and feed upon flowers?

When they rose to depart, there was a tone of tender melancholy in the "Good bye, Agnes," and the gentlest possible pressure of the hand—so gentle, that it was rather the heart than the hand that felt it; and all the way home he was eloquent on the strange dispensations of fate, and the mysterious ways of Providence, being privately of opinion that he could have managed matters a great deal better, if he had had the arranging of them.

"Agnes's misfortune is her pride," said Louisa; "and I really do not see what is to become of her now, unless some man takes a fancy to her; and I

was dressed as she should be, and brought out in London, I'll bet you anything you please she would be the acknowledged belle of the season."

"Well, it would be a safe bet, at all events." returned his sister, "for I fear the book of Agnes's fortunes contains no such page; but I do heartily wish she were well provided for."

Lionel was silent, for he felt he could scarcely echo the wish. Being provided for, implied a husband or a something, he did not know what; but he could not think of any mode in which he could like her to be provided for at present; besides, she was so interesting as she was!

From this period, there was not a day of his life, during his stay at Ravenscliffe, that his steps were not turned in the direction of Crawfurd's farm, in the hope of meeting her; and when he could make an excuse for calling there, he did. Sometimes he saw Agnes, but not always: she never presented herself, unless he asked to see her; and, without some reasonable motive to allege for doing so, he felt that he should alarm her pride. At length he bethought himself of carrying her flowers in the name of his sisters, and this stratagem procured him many interviews; but as she never invited him

to sit down, nor seated herself, they were very short ones.

"Be pleased to give my duty to Miss Grosvenor Sir, and say I am very much obliged to her."

"And are you not a little obliged to me for bringing them, Agnes?"

"Very, Sir; I am quite sorry you should take so much trouble."

"Did you ever read Shakespeare, Agnes?"

"A little, Sir."

"Do you remember what Macbeth answers, when the King bids him go forward to his castle, and prepare to receive him?"

"No, Sir."

"I am sorry to hear that, Mr. Crawfurd. I hope you have good medical advice."

"Why, Sir, doctors cost a good deal of money, and I feel no certainty whatever that they will do me any good."

"It is right to try, however; and I really see no reason for despairing. The famous Dr. Hipsley is coming down to Ravenscliffe for a couple of days next week; you must let me bring him over to see you!"

"I am sure, Sir, you are very good."

When Dr. Hipsley came, he had little to say that was encouraging to Mr. Crawfurd; but whilst the physician was shut up with the father in his bedroom, Agnes could do no less than invite Lionel into the parlour.

"Well, Agnes, did you look for that passage in Shakspeare?"

"Yes, Sir," said Agnes, whilst a faint blush suffused her cheek; but her pride and integrity forbad her to deny that she had done so.

"And what do you think of the answer?" asked he significantly.

"I think Macbeth must have had a black heart to speak so falsely."

"That's true, Agnes; a man who professes a

devotion he does not feel is a scoundrel. But all men are not Macbeths."

"It is to be hoped not, Sir."

"I hope you have not a bad opinion of men, Agnes."

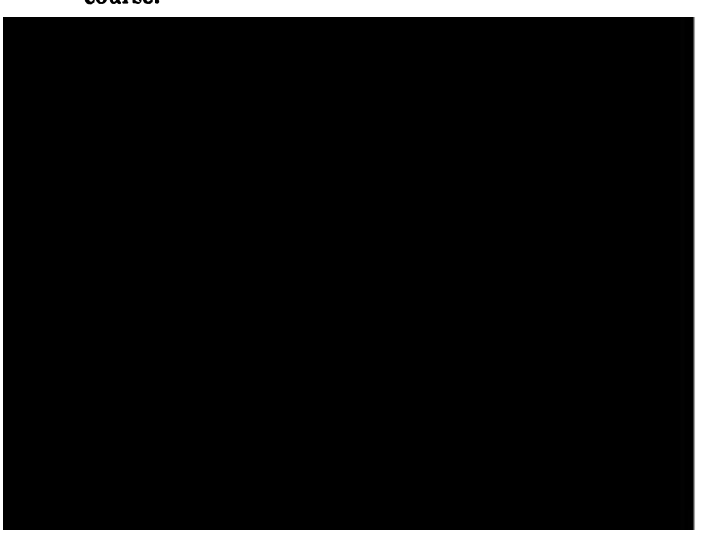
"I have no particular opinion, Sir; I have known very few."

"And amongst those few, Agnes, have you found none to interest you?"

"Oh yes, Sir."

"Indeed! And pray, may I inquire the name of this fortunate person?"

"I am interested in my poor father, Sir, of course."



"what! is it possible that so much beauty can exist without a heart?"

"I think I hear my father calling, Sir; please to excuse me;" but Lionel was sitting betwixt her and the door; and instead of allowing her to pass, he seized her by the hand. In an instant, the pride of a queen was on her brow, and with all the haughtiness of a sovereign she said, "I beg, Sir, you will let me pass."

"Never, Agnes, never, till you have heard me! I know that if I miss my opportunity now, you will not give me another!"

"Opportunity for what, Sir? You can have nothing to say to me that you ought to say."

"Yes I have, Agnes; I love you!"

"I should be very sorry if I thought it was true, Sir; but I am sure it is not. So I will thank you to let me go to my father."

"Your father is with Dr. Hipsley; and I am determined you shall hear me. I repeat, Agnes, I love you; look in my face, Agnes, whilst I tell you so."

"It would be neither for your credit nor mine, Sir, that I should call my father to protect me; and yet I certainly shall if you will not let me pass."

"I will not let you pass till you give me some hope; say that you will try to love me in return."

"I could never love anybody that had insulted me, Sir," said Agnes with a haughty and indignant curl of the lip.

"Insult you! By Heavens! there never was anything farther from my thoughts. Insult you! Is it an insult to love you? To fling myself at your feet, and swear I adore you?" But there was no relenting on the part of Agnes; pale and cold, she stood like a beautiful statue. "Am I so hateful to you, Agnes?—or is the name of Grosvenor so contemptible, that you would scorn to bear it?" A sudden flush here suffused the before marble

I assure you. I am not a man to be led by the nose. I'll marry the woman I like, depend upon it —that is, Agnes, if the woman I like will have me. Speak, Agnes, speak, I entreat! I hear them coming down stairs—say, will you love me?"

"It is impossible!" and, as she uttered these words, the door opened to admit Dr. Hipsley and her father. It was all over, therefore, for that day; and Lionel walked away with the physician, with his head in a whirl that quite disabled him from comprehending a statement of Mr. Crawfurd's case, which that learned gentleman favoured him with.

Making an offer of his hand to Agnes, was a thing that had never entered his head, when he commenced the above conversation; and had she conducted herself differently, it would not have happened; but without any expectation whatever of such a result, nor the most remote design of compassing what she would have thought an impossibility, Agnes had played a winning game. The pride, the purity, the dignity, the self-possession, wrought on his imagination and his passions, whilst the difficulty acted as a challenge to his pride and a spur to his inclinations. He was in it over head and ears before he knew what he was about; and now that the immediate excitement was over, he felt in a state of

amazement and confusion that rendered it difficult to arrange his thoughts. He was depressed too, as people are who feel they have said or done a rash or foolish thing, and he wished he had not committed himself so far.

This state of feeling continued for some hours —indeed, till he had ate his dinner; then the elevation consequent on a few glasses of champagne and claret, mellowed his view of the case; Agnes was a bewitching creature, whom he did not feel at all disposed to relinquish the thoughts of; and as for the proposal it would pass for a jest, and bound him to nothing. These reflections made his mind easy, and he went to bed and slept very comfortably

home, and was generally in the garden or in the parlour (the window of which looked straight upon the garden gate), was the first person visible; but seeing nothing of her now, he tapped with his cane upon the open door; whereupon, a fat, chubby-faced girl, with her sleeves tucked up, as if she was washing, came from behind the house, saying:

"Did you please to want anything, Sir?"

"I wish to see Miss Crawfurd—Agnes Crawfurd," he added, as the idea struck him that she had a sister.

"Agnes is out, Sir," said the girl. "She's gone with father, to Ellerton, to fetch the doctor's stuff!"

"Oh," said Lionel, "it's of no consequence;" and he walked away with his flowers in his hand. "That's her sister, of course," thought he; and then he figured to himself how he would like such a sister-in-law. "Devilish pleasant it would be, certainly!" and he felt it was fortunate that Agnes had been out, and thus rescued him from the danger of committing himself further. There was no harm done, and it was lucky he had pulled up in time.

This state of mind, with slight variations, continued for several days; and then there was a

reaction, and he felt a rising desire to see Agnes again.

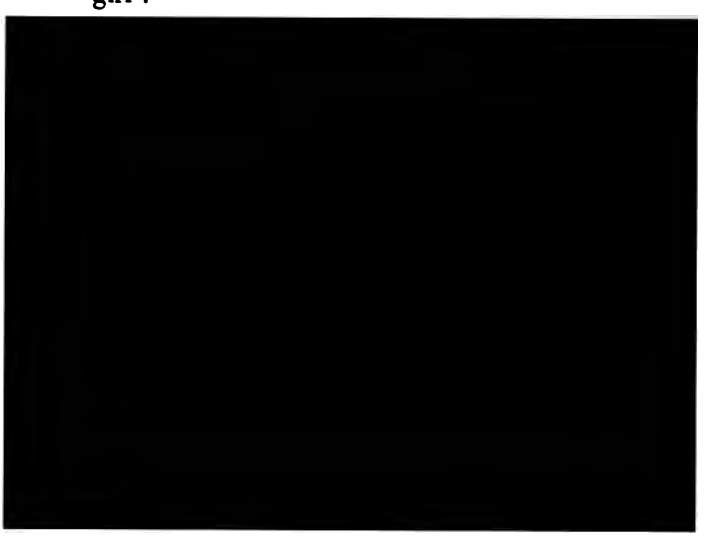
"D—n that sister of hers!" said he, one day, unconsciously giving utterance to his thoughts, as he was lying on the sofa after breakfast.

"Who is that you are anathematising so heartily?" inquired Louisa, who had heard the first emphatic word of the sentence, but missed the rest.

"Oh, nobody. I say, Louey, by-the-bye, hasn't Agnes Crawfurd a sister?"

"Yes, she has; why do you ask?"

"I believe I saw her one day, when I was in that direction—a fat, chubby-faced, vulgar-looking girl?"



worthy girl, as ever lived. When the mother was dying she committed Agnes to her care; and although she's only a year older, she's been more like a mother to her than a sister. By-the-bye, I want to speak to Agnes. Suppose we walk there before luncheon."

Lionel willingly consented. In his sister's company he was safe, and he had the interest of the visit without the peril. When they reached the Farm they walked up to the window of the parlour, and looked in, but Agnes was not there; neither was her work-basket on the table, nor was there any thing to denote that she inhabited the room. Immediately afterwards, however, they saw her descending the stairs. Louisa gave her hand, as she always did, saying: "I haven't seen you this long time, Agnes; why don't you come up sometimes, as I told you to do, at dressing time?" Lionel held out his hand, too, but Agnes was turning to open the parlour-door, and took no notice of it. When they entered the room, they all three sat down. At Ravenscliffe she always stood till they bade her sit; but in her father's house, never.

"We have some new dresses to be made before

we go to town, Agnes," said Louisa, "and Bennett wants you to help her."

"I shall be very happy, Ma'am," said Agnes colouring slightly.

"And we want you to do them at Ravenscliffe, you know you will sit in Bennett's room, and have nothing to do with Charpentier, whatever." During this speech Agnes's colour became a great deal deeper.

"I would rather work at home, Ma'am, if you please," she answered, but in a tone indicating pretty plainly that she would not work anywhere else.

"Well, Agnes, I think you're wrong," said

his so immediately under his sister's eye, that Agnes could not refuse to give him hers; but it was done with so much reserve and coldness, that Louisa remmarked it.

"I don't think Agnes likes your going there," said she; "though I cannot see what objection she can have when I am with you; but she is a very strange girl; and I am beginning to think Frances was not so far wrong, when she said that her acquaintance with us has been a great misfortune to her."

Lionel did not enlighten his sister with respect to the cause of Agnes's coldness, nor did he see her again before his departure for Oxford, which shortly ensued; but whilst there, he thought more of her than he had ever done before. Since that last interview she had taken a stronger hold of his heart, or of his fancy. He composed several copies of verses in honour of her beauty: some of which he enclosed to her by post, without any signature. He walked for hours along the banks of the Isis with his hands in his pockets, thinking of her vaguely; and although he formed no definite scheme for making her his own wife, he was quite clear in his objection to her being any body elses.

CHAPTER VII.

The little incidents I have related will serve to give some idea of Agnes's character, and of how accidental circumstances, seconding nature, she

happy under any other. Martha liked work as much as Agnes liked to be a lady, and had a double pleasure in it—a moral and a physical one. By nature, active, industrious, and locomotive, she delighted in bustling about, rubbing, scrubbing, sweeping, and washing; these occupations did her good, and kept her well and lively; and the sauce that heightened the pleasure was the thought that she was reserving Agnes free from the contaminations of labour and doing all she could to make a fine lady of her, as her mother had done before her; feelings which may be thought to do more credit to poor Martha's heart than her head; but the fact was, that having imbibed Mrs. Crawfurd's intense appreciation of Agnes's beauty and perfections, she believed firmly that her sister was destined to rise into another sphere of life; a persuasion which the intimacy and familiarity of the young people at Ravenscliffe tended to encourage and confirm. In short, Agnes was the pet and the spoilt child of everybody about her; and it was somewhat to her credit, since no pains whatever had been bestowed in educating or training her, that no worse faults were developed than those we have indicated. She knew she was handsome, as all handsome women do; but she was not vain, and she was fond of being

becomingly dressed, as all women should be, handsome or ugly; but she had the good taste to feel that any abortive attempts at finery or ornament are the worst of disfigurements, and that a well-chosen cotton gown, at sixpence a yard, if it be neatly made, and nicely fitted, is, in reality, (though it may not be equally consistent with all fortunes and conditions to wear it), quite as becoming as a silk at six shillings. It is the colour, make, and putting on, of a dress that constitute its becomingness; the material has little to do with the question, except in the case of three skirts of white tarlatane worn over white silk, for which I confess to a weakness.

how much purity; how much frigidity and how much fear; in the meantime, as we cannot penetrate these deep arcana of human nature, we can only pronounce upon conduct; and it is certain that Agnes's was unexceptionable; she encouraged no suitors or danglers, high or low.

Many a young tradesman who saw her at church, or on her rare visits to Ellerton with her father, sought in vain to gain her attention; but she had neither eyes nor ears for them. With her feelings, however, there was little power of resistance needed here; but not to mention Lionel, there were not a few youths of high degree who had, at one time or another, caught sight of her, whom it required but a glance to bring to her feet; but they never got it. She was too proud and too single-minded to lay schemes for entrapping them into marrying her, even had she thought success probable, which she was well aware it was not; and the only sentiment awakened by the semblance of a courtship from those quarters, was indignation. And there *was* merit here; because these curled darlings brought the most irresistible weapons into the field, namely, the habits, manners, and appearance of high birth and high breeding; but she felt

that any manifestations of admiration could have but one meaning, and were consequently insults which her condition laid her open to; and instead of being flattered and seduced, she resented them accordingly. And this it was that enabled her to withstand the blandishments of Lionel Grosvenor.

That one of so proud a race would marry her, she considered impossible; and although, for one moment, her heart leapt with surprise and pleasure when he asked her to say she would be his wife, it *was* but for a moment;—she saw that he had spoken under the influence of passion, and not from deliberate design; she saw that he repented, and she felt the drawing back a greater insult, as

sort of resistance, where the besieged starves the besieger, and cuts off his retreat; or at least, reduces him to such a state of weakness, that he has no longer strength to fly.

The more Agnes seemed determined to have nothing to say to Lionel, the more Lionel felt he could not live without Agnes; till at last the passion took such possession of his soul, that his whole thoughts were occupied with the struggle; and as, when a man's mind, and especially a *young* man's, is brim-full of a subject, it is difficult not to let it overflow upon somebody else, Lionel sought relief by imparting his troubles to his cousin Lewis Watson, who was also at Oxford, under pretence of preparing for the Church. It was not exactly a premeditated confidence either, but it happened one day when they had been dining together, *à propos* of Watson's saying that a poor fellow like himself, who had nothing but a curacy to expect, had no business to fall in love.

"On the contrary," said Lionel, "you have a better chance of marrying a girl you love than I have;—who'd interfere to prevent you?"

"Her father and mother would, of course; not to mention her brother, if she had one. I think we

have seen enough of that in our family. Did not her relations set themselves as much against my mother's marriage, as if my father had been a pick-pocket, or kept a public-house?"

"Very true; but she did marry your father for all that!"

"Yes, she did; but she has paid pretty dear for her whistle, let me tell you!"

"Her relations have never forgiven her, certainly!"

"Oh, d—n their forgiveness! I should care very little for their forgiveness, if their resentment did not keep us all poor. Now, a fellow like you can marry who you like, or do anything you please;

his way; "birth is certainly a consideration to some people; I should not, however, have thought you were one of them."

"Neither am I," answered Lionel. "It's not so much my own prejudice as other people's I am thinking of."

"So, so," thought Watson. "Some pretty governess, no doubt. Prejudices do exist on that head, it's not to be denied," he continued, aloud; "but of course it depends on circumstances or the amount of temptation, how far it may be wise to throw them over."

"Temptation enough!" said Lionel, with an expressive nod of the head.

"Besides," hinted Watson, "marriage in these cases is not always necessary."

"You don't know who you're talking of," said the other, impatiently.

"Not knowing the particulars, of course it is impossible to give an opinion," said Watson, rising and taking up his cap. "I think I shall go and have a ride. Perhaps I shall meet you at Fitzgibbon's to-morrow," and he moved towards the door.

"What makes you in such a devilish hurry?"

said Lionel. "Can't you sit still for half an hour?"

"Well, I suppose I could, if you make a point of it," returned the other, laughing; "but I began to see I was treading on dangerous ground; and as I never ask questions, or press myself into anybody's confidence, I thought it was time to cut."

"Pooh! pooh!" returned the other; "sit down and let's have a chat," and Watson did sit down; and then by degrees, without apparently seeking it, he obtained possession of the whole story; but being appealed to for advice, he declined giving any.

"It was too great a responsibility," he said, "to

without obstruction into this ready receptacle. He was a pleasant confidant, this Lewis Watson. He listened with so much patience and sympathy; viewed the thing on this side, viewed it on t'other; and abstained from bothering one with advice. Lionel grew more and more intimate with him, and it was a benediction to see the interest this poor young man, who had the reputation of reading hard, was feeling in the boyish loves of his rich cousin. This intimacy, however, was carefully concealed from everybody at Ravenscliffe, where the name of Watson was *tabooed* by the seniors of the family.

When Sir Francis presented Mr. Watson, the father with a living, because he did not choose that his niece should descend from the rank of a gentlewoman, he, as he himself declared, "washed his hands of them;" and never had she or any of her family been permitted to approach the patrimonial domain, nor had any written communications passed, except that one untimely letter which had been put under a cover, and insultingly returned to the writer, without a word of answer or comment.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the meantime, whilst the heir of Ravenscliffe was sojourning in this "Debateable Land," Ravenscliffe itself was a perfect nest of lovers. Henry

of his race. He was already an old man, had been twice married, and had suffered much in his mind on the subject of posterity. By his first wife he had no children, and after several years of ill-health she died; and when he married again, two daughters were born to him before he had a son. Meanwhile, his brother, Colonel Grosvenor, on whom the estate and title devolved if the elder died without a male heir, had also married; but neither had he a son. The sole fruit of the union was that daughter, who added to the family vexation by marrying a penniless curate of no family, whom all her relations detested. Thus, had Lionel not come into the world in the timely manner he did, this planet would have been afflicted with the entire extinction of the *Grosvenors*.

With Sir Francis's brother, the title would have died out, and the whole of the property, except certain sums set apart for the daughters, would, according to the wording of the last Baronet's will, have fallen to Lewis Watson; the testator seeming never to have contemplated the possibility of neither of his sons having a male heir (especially as he left three, the youngest of whom, however, did not long survive himself), male heirs being desideratums that had not been wanting in the family for

several hundred years. There had been a narrow escape this time, however, and Sir Francis treasured his son accordingly. At the period which we have now reached, Mr. Watson, the father, was dead; his son, who was some years older than Lionel, was reading for orders at college; and Colonel Grosvenor the grandfather of Lewis was alive, and apparently in good bodily health.

The time appointed for the marriage of the two elder daughters, Louisa and Frances, was now fast approaching; and the young ladies were so much occupied with their own love affairs, that they had well nigh forgotten Agnes, when their attention was recalled to her by the death of her father.

déjeúner, the happy couple start in a carriage and four for Dover, on their way to the continent, &c., may be read any day in the "Morning Post," and I will therefore not pause to describe. Of course, Lionel was present on the occasion; and the brother and sisters parted with a half promise, that he would join them shortly in Paris, or wherever they might be.

"And what are you going to do now, Lionel?" said Louisa.

"I am going to take a run down to Ravenscliffe for a little hunting. I don't feel at all well, and I think the exercise will do me good."

And this project he fulfilled; having, two days before his departure, dispatched by post the following epistle, addressed to "Miss Agnes Crawfurd, at the Holmes, Ellerton, Devonshire:"—

"Do not, Agnes, I conjure you, when you look at the signature that terminates this letter, fling the offending paper away from you. Read it—read it calmly, Agnes. Give me a fair hearing. Do not let your pride or your resentment, or both united, make you guilty of injustice. Even the worst criminals are not condemned unheard; and remember, Agnes, though firmness in a good cause

is highly commendable, we not unfrequently indulge our pride and prejudice under the disguise of that virtue.

"You see I do not flatter you, and you should be the more disposed to credit what I am going to say. I know you are offended with me, and—you see how candid I am—I admit that I gave you cause. I will own, what very few men will avow, I was a coward, Agnes; as much a coward as a man that, against the will of his better self, is carried by his terrors from the battle-field; knowing that nothing but a degree of wretchedness, to which death is millions of times preferable, can result from his weakness. But, Agnes, judge me indulgently;

then; I should have flung myself at your feet, crying, 'Agnes, will you be mine?' and never have risen from the earth till you answered in the affirmative. I almost did this once: you remember the day when I brought Dr. Hipsley to see your poor father, who is now dead. But how did you meet my ardour? How did you requite my affection? Was it not with a cold and haughty disdain?—perhaps even with suspicion? You chilled me, Agnes; you flung back my proffered heart, and then I said, 'Why should I make sacrifices for this heartless beauty? Let me rather cling to those family ties, which are a man's last resource when the cold world has chilled and disappointed him. I will forget her; I will seek elsewhere a home for my heart, and learn to be happy without her.'

"It is now nearly three years since the day that I walked beside Dr. Hipsley from the Holmes to Ravenscliffe, with these thoughts and feelings seething my heart and brain; and I tried—for I will not deceive you, Agnes—I tried to execute my resolution; I tried to forget you, and to love elsewhere, and many a fair girl I have led to the dance, with a determination to see in her the charms of Agnes Crawfurd. But have I succeeded? Alas!

no, no, no! I love *you*, and only *you*. I see no beauty but in your eyes, hear no music but in your voice. You are my loadstar—the light that lights the world to me—whereby I see all things glorious and beautiful, and without which darkness, despair and death, must ensnare my footsteps!

"If I believed that the coldness with which you have received my advances proceeded from aversion, I should have forborne to make an appeal that must have proved vain; but—it may be that my hopes deceive me—I think it is rather in resentment, wounded pride, and a doubt of my intentions, than dislike to your old friend and playfellow, that I must seek the key to your reserve.

Perhaps there was nothing very satisfactory or explicit in this letter, and it is not impossible that a person more experienced in the ways of the world, and in poor human nature, than Agnes was, might have found some reason to suspect that Lionel was not perfect in the heroic mood that he assumed; that there was still some wavering and struggling with prejudice, and that, like the poor cat in the adage, he was letting, "I dare not wait upon I would." But this was a depth of insight beyond her. She was exceedingly surprised; could scarcely indeed believe her eyes; reading the letter again and again, to make sure that her senses were not deceiving her; but having assured herself that the words were there, she saw but one interpretation to put upon them—the obvious one, as it appeared to her—that Lionel Grosvenor was coming down into the country with the intention of offering her his hand; and as Martha, her only confidante, saw everything in the letter that Agnes saw, little remained to discuss but her own feelings, and how the proposal should be received.

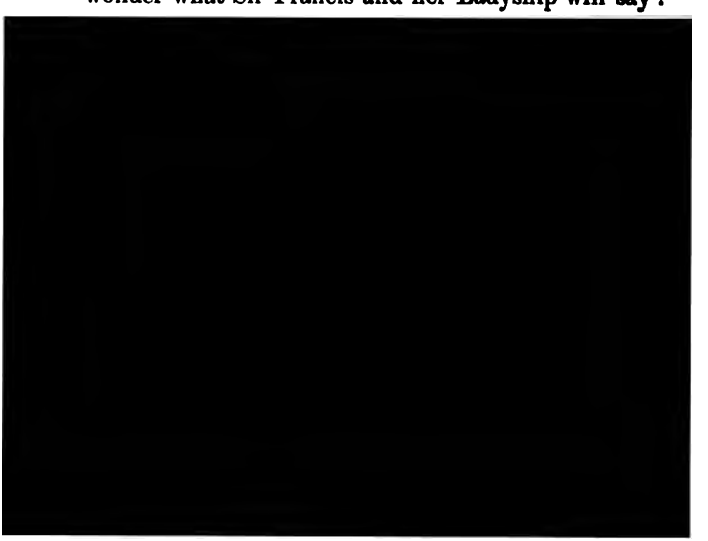
"I always expected something of the sort," said Martha; "and I do not see anything to be so much surprised at. What should have brought him here so often, if he had not come after you?"

"I never doubted that either," said Agnes, "but I could not believe that he was sincere; that is, that he meant honourably by me; and perhaps he did not always."

"I dont think it is fair to say that of him," answered Martha. "You could not expect him to speak out all at once, especially when you were so cold and distant to him, that he might suppose you did not like him."

"He knew why I was distant," said Agnes. "His letter shows that."

"Well, Agnes, I think bygones should be bygones, now that he *has* spoke out so handsome. I wonder what Sir Francis and her Ladyship will say!



Agnes saw the difficulty very well. She knew, by experience, how insolent the servants in great houses can be; and she knew that Martha, excellent as she was in her way, could never be polished into a lady. She anticipated the sneers of the *aletaille* and the raised eyebrows of the haughty aristocrats; and yet her pride, as well as her affection, revolted at the alternative. She saw clearly, that although this proposal of Lionel's fulfilled, in many respects, her dearest wishes, that still there was many a sting in reserve for her; and she saw these the more clearly, that her sight was not obscured by passion; for she was not what is called *in love* with him. To say that it was not within the compass of her character to fall in love, would be rash; she had never been fairly tried.

It is true, that many a girl, with less pride and more passion, would have been enamoured of Lionel, to whom he had given half the motive and the cue for passion he had given her; but hers was not an emotional nature easily moved to love. Doubtless, the man existed somewhere on the earth, who, had he *come*, would have *seen* and *conquered*; but in the lottery of life the great proportion of women are never vanquished, for they never meet their victor.

How few women have ever been in love! How few even marry from election! They marry because they are asked, and because the marriage is suitable. It is their vocation to be married; parents approve, and they have no other attachment. Any observant person living in society, where there is a continual marrying and giving in marriage, must be struck with this fact. Cupid's quiver must be exhausted, or his arrows blunt—he pierces few hearts now. I incline to think that a girl really in love—one who bore the evident symptoms of the malady—would be thought very improper; yet I have often fancied that there must be a man born into the world for every woman; one whom to see would be to love, to

is, that she liked him better than anybody in the world, and quite as well as half the women in it like the men they marry; and she was so little capable of disguise or subserviency, that had she disliked him, in spite of all the apparent advantages of the match, she would assuredly have declined it. As it was, although, from his past hesitation, her pride was not unscathed; and although, during her sojourn at the Castle, she had seen too much of high life, both below stairs and above, not to have considerable misgivings with respect to her future position, it did not occur to her for a moment to refuse him.

To Martha, this proposal of Lionel's seemed to promise everything that was desirable for her sister; whilst to Agnes, more experienced and less sanguine, it appeared, at all events, the best thing that could happen to her.

CHAPTER IX.

LIONEL arrived at Ravenscliffe, and at the appointed time paid his visit at the Holmes; and it was about three weeks after that visit, that the

too much in his letter—gone too far—implied more than was necessary; however, it was but implication—there was nothing direct or binding. He should see, and would be guided by circumstances, and by what he should observe in Agnes; and the result has been related.

Agnes had put the plain interpretation on his letter, received him with calm dignity; avowing to him at once that she *had* doubted his intentions, and that, until those doubts had been removed, she would never have relaxed in her reserve. Farmer's daughter as she was, and well born as he was, she awed him by the force of her will, and the singleness of her purpose. There was no double meaning, no wavering or uncertainty, no *arrière pensée*. Her thought and her feeling were perhaps not very exalted, not at all romantic, nor indeed mingled with much sentiment; but it was clear, steady, entire, and avowed without reserve; whereas Lionel was hampered and trammelled by the want of a firm resolution and perfect sincerity. He was too much *épris* with Agnes to endure the thought of losing her, but he saw the inconveniences of the marriage too clearly to proceed in it without painful misgivings; nevertheless, there was nothing else for it now, but to go forward

in that direction, or break off altogether. His passion would not allow him to do the latter, so he must needs proceed in the affair, as she understood it.

Sometimes he was willing enough too, especially when he was with her; but at other times his resolution wavered. No doubt the sacrifice was considerable, especially the sacrifice of a prejudice so long established and universal.

The fact was, that Agnes was very much his superior in all things but birth, education and fortune. Nature had been more liberal to her than to him, in every respect: not only was she the handsomest of the two, but, in spite of her faults,

choice; but how to overcome the prejudices of his family—of Sir Francis and his mother, especially—he could not imagine. But when he reached this passage in his reflections, they became so disagreeable, that he generally turned his thoughts into some pleasanter channel.

At other times, he took a more favourable view of the case, deciding that there was no necessity whatever for telling his father anything about the matter. He could manage very well to conceal the whole affair till the old gentleman's death. Agnes would not require to live at a great expense, and if anybody became aware that a connection subsisted between them, it would never be supposed to be of the nature it really was. Nobody would suspect she was his wife, whilst her mind and feelings would be appeased by knowing that she was so; and hereafter he could avow her, and so forth. Such reflections did not bespeak a very high tone of morality certainly, neither did they argue the existence of a very exalted sentiment for Agnes; *mais il était fait comme ça;* and we must not expect fine pearls from muscles.

However important secresy was, it soon appeared that the marriage could not be satisfactorily carried through, without taking several persons into their

confidence. Martha, of course, was one; and John Gibson, who was the only inmate of the family, and though a servant, as much attached to them as if he were their brother, could scarcely be left out; Agnes indeed insisting that both he and her sister should be present at her wedding; but they were both so sure and safe that there was nothing to be feared from that quarter. The necessity for a private marriage, and subsequent concealment, was much less a subject of surprise to Agnes than to Martha; the former having always anticipated a difficulty which the other, in her ignorance and innocence, had not foreseen. But there was another person inevitably associated with the secret, and that was the clergy-

and had just taken orders. He was a person Lionel had never liked, and with whom he had associated very little; but he knew him to be much under the influence of his elder brother, Lewis, who was already in possession of the important secret—at least, up to a certain point—and whom he did not think capable of betraying him; on the contrary, Lewis had earnestly cautioned him to be on his guard, lest his father should discover his attachment to Agnes; particularly advising him, when the old man pressed him to lose no time in selecting a wife—which he often did—not to refuse, but to temporise.

"Appear always willing, but fastidious," said he. "That is the way to gain time, and preserve your liberty; and by and bye, when the Governor drops off, you can do as you like."

Watson had not believed that Lionel possessed sufficient independence of spirit, or sufficient love for Agnes, to brave all the inconveniences of marrying her during his father's lifetime, and he was taken quite by surprise when his cousin broached the subject to him; but, as usual, he ventured no direct opinion, only he bade Lionel consider well before he bound himself irrevocably to a woman whom he might not continue to love.

"Why," said Lionel, "I have certainly a better chance of loving Agnes, who is the only woman I ever had a fancy for, than Lady Julia Darnley, or Elizabeth Bellingham; one or the other of whom, I suppose, I shall be obliged to marry at last, if I do not marry Agnes."

"But why not wait? Temporise, temporise. Do nothing rashly," said Watson.

"That advice was very good before," answered Lionel, "but it will unfortunately not do now. Old Crawfurd, her father, is dead; and as Agnes has nobody belonging to her but one sister, the two girls must leave the farm, and do something to support themselves; for she will accept no assistance from me, nor anybody else. Now, this won't do.

our parish, Marsden, to do it; but I am not sure that he's safe."

"He'll keep the secret for his own sake," suggested Watson.

"No doubt, if I could get him to perform the ceremony; but if, on the other hand, he refuses, I suspect he'd make a merit of the refusal, and tell my father,"

"Nothing more likely, I think," returned Lewis. "'A bird in the hand's worth two in the bush,' any day, you know."

"Do you think your brother Gerald would do it?" asked Lionel. "Could he be trusted?"

"Why, I think I could ensure his silence," answered Watson, "but whether his compliance, I cannot say; but should you determine on the step, I'll put the question to him, if you like."

"You see," said Lewis to his brother, when he broached the subject to him, "it would not be a bad game, after all. He has little character, and will be easily pushed into a marriage with some girl of rank and fortune, by his father, who, the older he is, will be the more eager about it. Then, we're done, you know."

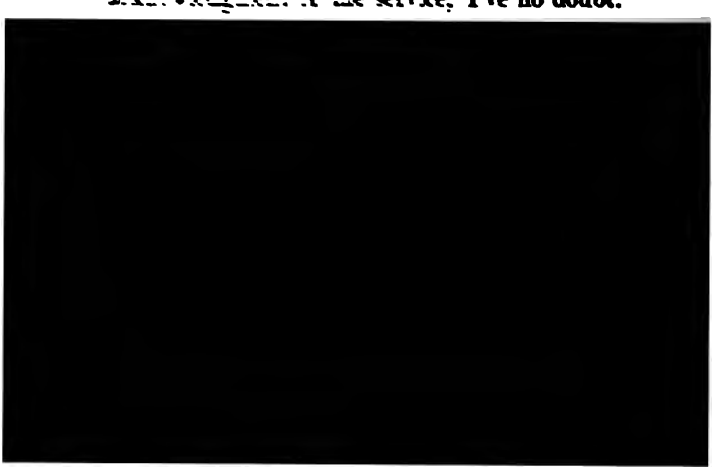
"You're done, whilst he lives, married or single,"

said Lewis, 'and he's as young as you. Why should you reckon on his death?"

"I don't reckon on it; but it's on the cards, you know. He's devilish fond of boating and horses, and he had one or two pretty squeaks for it, whilst he was at Oxford. You see, if he marries this girl, he'll be tired of her in a month, and will be ready to marry anybody else his father recommends."

"But he can't do it."

"Oh no, of course, he can't do it," said Lewis; "but we, that is a matter we have nothing to do with. The question is—are you disposed to make friends with him by performing the ceremony? If the old fellow dies, he'll give you a living, in acknowledgment of the service, I've no doubt."



his shoes, and then you've nobody to look to but him."

"If I consent," said Gerald, "it must be on condition of the most absolute secresy."

"Of course, that is understood."

"I must not be seen by anybody, except the girl herself."

"I'll tell Lionel so, but there is no fear of a wedding party, you may be sure."

"And, moreover, I shall make it a condition that she shall not know who I am. I am a clergyman—that is enough for her."

"I think you are right," said Lewis. "Then I'll tell Lionel, that, on these conditions, you agree."

"Yes, on these conditions, I'll marry them; since you say it's to take place in their own chapel."

In consequence of this arrangement, Lionel invited the two young men to visit Ravenscliffe for a few days during the absence of the family in London; and Lewis, who had a good deal of curiosity to see a place which his sanguine and scheming temper led him to hope would one day be his own, gladly accepted the invitation; whilst Gerald, more cold and cautious, and with less interest in an inheritance from which he felt himself so remote, declined it, departing immediately

after the ceremony was performed, leaving no traces of his exploit behind him except, indeed, the certificate in the property of [illegible], Lionel, and even Lewis, had wanted, but which Gerald had very unwillingly signed.

As Lionel's apartments, consisting of a bed and bed-chamber, a dressing-closet, and a small anti-room, which he called his armoury, were situated in a tower which had an entrance of its own, wherein nobody else slept but his trusty valet, Leighton, his nightly absences were unknown to any body but this friend, who, whatever he might see, was far too well-trained to open his lips about his master's affairs; and as two women and a deaf

CHAPTER X.

One week had passed in sweet endearment; the little restraints and difficulties of meeting that beset the young couple, rendering more precious the hours they spent together at the farm. Agnes felt happy and proud, and Lionel loved her as his wife better than he had done before she became so. Content to wait, and anxious for concealment, she did not dislike the obscurity in which she was destined to pass the early years of her marriage; she was conscious of her deficiencies, in regard to manners and accomplishments, aware that she had much to do before she could rise to the level of her new rank in these particulars, and she was glad of the retirement and leisure that awaited her in

London, where no mortal would know who she was. She resolved to work hard at those studies which she had seen formed the occupation and ornament of her husband's sisters; music, drawing, languages, &c.; any higher sort of cultivation she knew nothing of, none such being in vogue at Ravenscliffe.

Almost the only trouble she had regarding the future, was the prospect of a separation from her sister. Glad she would have been to take her to London with her, and there, whilst unobserved in that large city, have prepared her too for another sphere of life; but she saw that Lionel could not share her feelings there. He had no interest in Martha, was little capable of estimating her valuable

that it would have failed; she never could be polished into a lady; besides which, an idle life would not suit her, neither could she submit to live upon other people; she must work for her living. There was a prospect that the new tenants who were coming to the farm, would keep her to manage the dairy, and the bakehouse, and the poultry yard, in all of which departments she was a first rate hand; if this hope failed, she must look for something else; she knew she could earn her bread well.

In spite of all this sound sense and cheering consolation, Martha felt the parting much more deeply than Agnes did, and it was natural that it should be so; for though but eighteen months older, yet from the manner in which they had been brought up, besides a fanatical admiration of her beauty, Martha had a sort of maternal tenderness for Agnes, mingled with her sisterly affection.

Agnes was heartily sorry too, but she also felt that if Martha was past polishing, it would be impossible to make her the companion of Lionel, or thereafter produce her to the world. She knew in her secret heart, how ashamed she herself would be of her, for she had had many a pang on that score ere now, and she believed it was better as it had

been arranged. Still they formed projects for oc
sional meetings; and Lionel, not to be too hard
the first quarter of his honeymoon, countenan
their schemes.

Poor John Gibson too was, as he said of hims
"sadly down in the mouth." An orphan cl
from the workhouse, he had come to Mr. Crawfu
when he was scarcely big enough to lift the li
Misses, as he called them, who were then m
infants. Having been half starved, and hars
treated in his infancy, he thought himself in Pa
dise when he got to the Holmes, where he was v
used, and had as much homely food as he need
and as he had a good large sound heart in

cured himself a situation as boots at a small inn called "The Horse and Hound," lately established on the London Road, by a man with whom he had some acquaintance.

As the day appointed for the arrival of the new tenant at the farm now drew nigh, it was arranged that Agnes should proceed to London by the night coach in order to avoid observation, and that, John Gibson should start at the same time and escort her so far on her journey, the place he was destined to, lying on the way. On the morning of that day, Lionel having directed her how to proceed on her arrival in London, bade her farewell, promising to see her in Park Lane in a week or less. He was engaged to spend a few days with Sir Abraham Towers, and was to leave Ravenscliffe that morning; his visitor, Lewis Watson, having departed on the preceding one. Not without anxiety certainly, but with more hope than fear, Agnes now set herself to prepare for her journey, whilst Martha was busy making ready for the new tenants. It was as much her pride and her pleasure as it was her interest, to have everything clean and neat for them, and the occupation these necessary operations furnished, kept her from thinking too much of the impending separation. Still it lay at her heart, and

every now and then, in the midst of her scrubbings and her rubbings, she was obliged to take up the corner of her apron to wipe her eyes. Gibby, in the meantime, was gone to the castle, by the desire of Lionel, who had forgotten to provide Agnes with money for her journey, the little that the farm, stock, and utensils brought being, of course, appropriated to Martha—it was but little, for they had run very low, and were in bad condition, Daniel Crawfurd's poverty not being able to afford the necessary refittings and repairs.

When John returned, he brought a note, but no money; the note being to the effect, that on reaching the castle, Lionel had found a message

going to bed early. I will give you the money this evening.

"Yours, affectionately,

"L. G.

"P.S. You had better let John Gibson be at the corner of the road, when the coach passes, with your luggage, as you can stay with me till then; and it is better, on all accounts, than being taken up at Ellerton."

The plan was, of course, acceded to. Agnes had but one moderately-sized trunk, for the additions to her wardrobe, which her new condition demanded, were to be made in London; and Gibby's whole possessions being easily transported in a stout cotton handkerchief, there was no difficulty about the baggage. He engaged to be at the appointed spot a quarter of an hour before the coach would be up, recommending her to be early too, for that Bob, the new driver, kept his time sharp. Towards evening, the strangers arrived to take possession. Agnes kept out of their way as much as possible, Martha bustling about and doing all the honours. Fortunately they brought no servant, and being tired with their day's exertions, they were glad to sit down in the parlour, where Martha had got a good

[redacted] Thus the girls had [redacted] having done [redacted] by the heavy thinking [redacted] and washing Martha [redacted] the kettle, [redacted] in her father's [redacted] and a young shot [redacted] of the subject [redacted] never looked oc- [redacted] she had to spare from [redacted] whom [redacted]

[redacted] plenty to do, putting up and feeding the new tenant's horse,

"I hope not," answered Agnes; "it would be very unpleasant, for they'll be sure to ask questions about where I'm going, and I shan't know what to say."

"What can you say?" inquired Martha.

"I'm sure I can't think," returned the other.

"Will there be anybody to meet you, when you get to London?"

"Yes, there's to be somebody there in a coach, to take me to the lodging. How I wish you were going with me. I shall feel so awkward amongst strangers, till Lionel comes."

"I wonder if you will see Sir Francis and my Lady in London?"

"I hope not. Lionel says it's such a large place, there is no danger whatever."

"I shall be longing for a letter, to know about everything, and what sort of journey you had, and if you're comfortable. You'll get in to-morrow evening. Be sure you look after your box; they say the place is full of thieves. I read in a paper, once, about a girl having her box stole by a man that offered to carry it for her."

"Are the people in the parlour still?" asked Agnes, after a pause.

"Yes; I must go and see if they've do
perhaps they'll want more water."

"I should like to go up and take another
poor father's room; I shall never see it again
Agnes.

When she came down again, John Gibson
the kitchen.

"It's getting on to be time to go," h
drawing out a huge silver watch; "it's nigh
six. Can I fetch down the box now?"

Being informed that it was ready, he as
the stairs, and entered the best bed-chamber
had been, for the last week, tenanted by
and her husband, but he saw no box. T

fully down on a chair; half-lifted the trunk, dropped it again; took up the handkerchief, folded it in a very awkward fashion, and hastily thrust it into his bosom. Then he raised the trunk again, but with considerably more alertness than before, and descended the stairs with a feeling of exultation, only dashed a little with an awkward consciousness of what he had done. He felt shy of looking Agnes in the face, and after hinting that it was time to go, and bidding farewell to Martha, he left the kitchen, and stood at the door waiting till Agnes came out.

She had risen from her chair, and was pinning her shawl, and tying on her bonnet, and Martha stood beside her weeping, now outright.

"My dear old pudding," sobbed Agnes, throwing her arms around her sister's neck, and calling her by the familiar appellation that Martha's fat, round figure had won for her in the family; "good bye, dear—good bye."

And so, betwixt tears, and kisses, and good byes, they made their way, with their arms twined round each other, to the door where John was standing, whereupon he stepped out, and walked forward. Then there was another embrace, several more good byes; "Be sure you write," from Martha; and the sisters were parted.

[redacted] and Agnes walked [redacted] heavy on her [redacted] its own feelings and [redacted] than she [redacted]

[redacted] heavy for you, Gibby,"

[redacted] heavy for me; [redacted] it would be light [redacted]

[redacted] in your new [redacted] pursue the [redacted]

[redacted] said John, and

could scarce keep your legs, and it aint to be supposed I'm very blithe to go."

"No, Gibby, one can't be blithe to leave the home of one's childhood, even though one's prospects are ever so bright. I wish with all my heart the new tenant would have hired you, that you might have staid near Martha; it would have been pleasanter for both of you."

"I should have been glad to stay," answered John; "but, by and bye, when you're coming down to the Castle in your coach-and-four, I shall get a sight of you sometimes, as you go by."

"It will be a good while before that happens, Gibby; and meanwhile, be sure you never hint to anybody in the world about my marriage. It might do great harm to my husband. You must never mention it till I give you leave."

"In course, I won't; I'd cut my tongue out first. You needn't be afeard of me."

"I'm not afraid of you, Gibby; only I know it would gratify you to be able to say I was married to Mr. Grosvenor."

"Humph!" said John; "I'll not say it, whether or no."

When they reached the little park door, she found

Lionel wrapped in his cloak, waiting for her; and having reminded John Gibson where he was to meet her, she proceeded with her husband to his apartments, whilst the faithful John repaired to the cottage of an acquaintance, there to wait till the hour approached for the arrival of the London coach.

The conversations of lovers and newly-married pairs being amusing to nobody but themselves, it would be needless to transcribe that of the young couple in question. They had a long chat, and a very cosey supper, which Lionel had previously had laid in his room by the trusty Mr. Leighton, and Agnes enjoyed the evening especially. This taste of her new condition was of a kind she had not

her. In short, the evening passed so quickly away, that it was time to part before they thought it was half over.

"Lionel, look at the clock!" she said, pointing to a small ormulu timepiece that stood on the chimney piece. "I must go, or I shall miss the coach."

"You've half an hour to the good yet," he said, "and then I'll put on my cloak and go with you."

Hush!" said Agnes, "did'nt you hear the door?"

"It's only the wind; it shakes sometimes when the wind sets in this direction."

"I hope there will be nobody in the coach," said Agnes, "especially no Ellerton people. Listen! I'm sure I hear somebody, Lionel."

"There's nobody, I assure you, unless it's Leighton; there's nobody else sleeps in this tower, and he has been gone to bed sometime." And as he spoke, he opened the door into the ante-room where his hat and cloak hung, and they saw that there was no one there. "I'll walk with you and deliver you safe into the hands of Mr. John Gibson," he added, whilst he drew on his boots, and she put on her bonnet and shawl. They were both ready to

that they hastily separated; and
turned to open the door that led in
ment, Agnes terrified at the thou
discovered, rushed through the ante-
at the front door which she left op
scarcely off the steps, when she was h
by another person—a man whose
could not discern, but he had on a g
was considerably taller and larger
In an instant, the thought darted acr
that she was watched, and that if sl
escape, betrayal and exposure awaited
feet winged with this apprehension, she
heels, flying across the lawn like a har
the hounds. She had been so famili
place from her childhood, that the fe
the stars was quite sufficient to guid
little door which opened from within by a

"Oh Gibby!" she exclaimed out of breath, "I'm so glad you're here! I was so afraid you would'nt."

"Afraid I would'nt!" said John astonished, "What did you think I'd be doing that I would'nt be here?"

"Nothing," said Agnes, recollecting herself, for her pride would not allow her to mention the alarm she had had; "but I was afraid you might mistake the hour."

"Not I," said he, "I kept my watch in my hand."

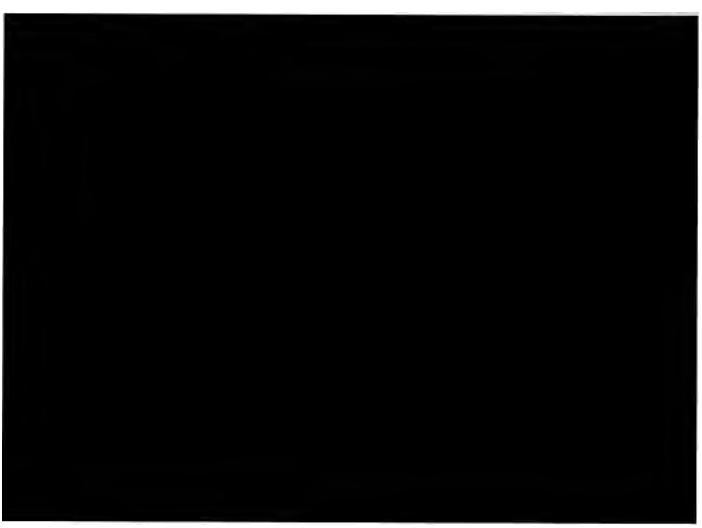
"Hush!" she said interrupting, and retreating behind him, "I hear afoot;" and she had scarcely uttered the words when the same person passed that she had seen issue from the door of the tower. He came along the same road she had done, and must have issued from the park by the same outlet. Betwixt the obscure light and the hat, and the handkerchief round the throat, the features were still undiscernible, but she felt sure it was the same person. He was walking very fast, and either did not observe, or took no notice of them; she indeed being so far concealed by Gibby, that she was not visible.

"Do you know who that is?" she whispered when the figure had passed.

"No," said he, "I didn't see his face; but I don't think it's anybody belonging hereabouts."

"Don't speak so loud," she said, trembling with some undefined apprehension. "How I wish the coach would come."

"It will be a quarter of an hour or more yet, I expect," said John; "perhaps you'd better walk up and down, you'll get cold standing." Agnes dreading every instant that the mysterious figure would return in search of her, would not stir a step from his side.



CHAPTER XI.

THE alarm and her consequent rapid flight had, however, brought Agnes to the rendezvous considerably before the necessary time, as John's fidelity and devotion had done by him; and full half an hour—which appeared to her at least double that time—elapsed, before they heard the wheels.

"I'm sure it's past! I'm certain we've missed it; it could never be so late," she had insisted half a dozen times over; John vainly assuring her that she was mistaken. However, it came at last, and the two pale lamps—not such lamps as coaches are furnished in these days—showed dimly through the gloom.

"Heaven be praised!" said Agnes. John cried *Hoigh!* and in a few words explained to the guard,

who jumped down, that they were the two passengers, one in and one out, that were to have been taken up at Ellerton; whereupon the door was opened, and Agnes handed in; John, as soon as he saw her safely seated, mounting the roof.

There was only one person in the coach, a gentleman who sat in a corner, apparently asleep. Her entrance did not appear to disturb him, for he neither spoke or stirred; and they soon reached Ellerton, where the coach changed horses, and where, by the light of a lantern, carried by a maid servant, who was escorting her mistress home from a tea party, she saw that her companion had a handkerchief over his face. This was the only

Ellerton; the coach was soon in motion again, and no Ellertonian getting in to augment her anxiety, she began to feel at her ease, and the slumber she had feigned, ere long overtook her in reality. Roused for a moment by the horses stopping at the next stage, she lifted the handkerchief from her face, and took a peep at her companion, but apparently undisturbed, he was exactly in the same position as before.

The next place they were to stop at was 'The Horse and Hound,' where they were to sup, and where John Gibson was to leave the coach. As the man who kept this inn had previously lived at Ellerton, Agnes had charged John to be very cautious not to betray her. Accordingly when they stopped, and the landlord opened the door saying, "Twenty minutes allowed for supper here, ladies; supper gentlemen?" She sat still with her face covered, and her companion seemed disposed to do the same; at least he remained till all the passengers and the coachman had entered the house, and then he let himself out, saying to John, who just then came to the door to speak to Agnes, after having made his arrival known to his new master;

"Do you belong to the house?"

"Yes, Sir," answered John who felt himself

——— my care to m-
where he took me up." Whereupon
peared with the mite, whilst the gen
backwards and forwards near the hou
by chance or design, never in a positio
Agnes to see his face.

Presently John came out, saying, t
would bring the change; and then ap
window, he put in his head and asked
she was,

"Pretty well," she answered in a
"I've got a very quiet fellow-traveller, a
asleep."

"They'll soon be out," he said, "and
no more time to say good-bye; but rem
you go to live at the castle, if you can g
work in the lowest compacity, I shall be

"It will be long before I shall live the
she answered. "I

door, let himself in; whilst Agnes, still on her guard, lest the landlord should recognise her, resumed her former attitude.

In the meantime, the outside passengers, in their drab coats, cloaks, and comforters, were flocking out and ascending to the roof, followed by the coachman, who, coming to the door, said: "Here's your change, Sir!" The gentleman stretched out his arm, and took it uncounted; the coachman mounted his box, and away they went. The stranger settled himself to sleep again, and so did Agnes, giving a sigh to the faithful friend she was leaving behind her as she dropped into a slumber, from which she was, by and bye, awakened by her companion's letting down the glass and putting his head out of the window.

"Hoigh!" cried he to the coachman, who thereupon drew up; whilst the guard descended from the roof and opened the door.

"I told you to set me down here," said the traveller.

"Any luggage, sir?"

"No!" replied the other, who immediately disappeared, whither Agnes did not see; but as there were lights indicating a town not far off, she concluded that to be his destination.

And what was poor John Gibson doing the while? He stood looking after the coach, listening to the rumble of the wheels as long as the air conveyed the sound to his ears; and then, with a heavy sigh, he turned to re-enter the house, stooping, as he did so, to pick up a piece of white paper, which lay by the steps. Into this, as neatly as he could, when he reached his room, he folded the treasure concealed in his bosom, the spotted handkerchief, hallowed to his faithful heart, because it had been worn by Agnes.

Poor fellow! he was far the most unhappy of the three! Agnes had her new hopes and interests to cheer her; Martha her old home, habits and asso-

owner, who, to Agnes's great annoyance, proved to be Mr. Marsden, the curate, who, of course, recognized her immediately, and lost no time in inquiring her destination and the object of her journey. Had she left the service of the ladies at the castle, or was she going to join them in London, or had she got another situation? All which inquiries eliciting no satisfactory information, he next took upon himself to warn her of "the dangers that awaited young females so highly favoured by nature as herself," with a mixture of sententious dullness and pitiful gallantry that utterly disgusted her.

Agnes had quite dignity and self-possession enough to silence a puppy any day; but despise him as she would, the consciousness of his presence embarrassed her exceedingly, when, on the arrival of the coach at the 'White Horse Cellar', a smart lad, in a plum-coloured livery, stepped forward, and, touching his hat, inquired if she was Mrs. Dacres. She had half a mind not to acknowledge herself, and sate for a moment silent, in hopes of seeing Mr. Marsden get out before her; but, unfortunately, he was going forward to the city, and there was nothing for it but to say *yes*, and accept the services of the lad; who thereupon helped her to descend, took possession of her luggage, and placed

her and it in a coach with all the *à plomb* and alertness, that distinguishes young gentlemen of that class in London and Paris.

A small, but elegantly furnished house in Park Lane, was ready to receive her; and two maid-servants, in addition to the footboy, formed her establishment. There was no splendour; but for the scale of the thing, it was *parfaitement bien monté*. Agnes felt that she could be very happy there with Lionel, and the new studies that were to occupy her.

On the following morning after breakfast, enticed by the view of the park in front of her windows, she put on her bonnet, and went across the road

Lionel arrived, which she expected would be on the fourth day at farthest.

This first taste of her new state was dull enough, but she was sustained by hope; and whilst she is anticipating her husband's arrival, we must return to Ravenscliffe, and see what happened there after she left it.

CHAPTER XII.

[redacted] Agnes, winged with the [redacted] rushed through the



which the other struggled hard to elude. But, Lionel, never doubting that it was his own servant he was engaged with, held on pertinaciously, till feeling himself suddenly stabbed in the breast with some sharp instrument, he let go his hold; and as he sunk to the ground, the intruder fled through the opposite door, and all this being but the work of a few moments, overtook Agnes on the lawn.

In the meanwhile, Leighton, who lay overhead, either not being asleep, or awakened by the loud tones of his master's voice, and imagining that some furious quarrel had occurred betwixt him and his expected visitor, jumped out of bed and opened his door, in order to ascertain what was going on. A few words that reached his ears, and the sound of a man's foot hastily making way through the outer door, satisfying him there was some more serious matter than he had anticipated, he hastily threw on his clothes and descended the stairs to Lionel's apartments, where he found all the doors open, and his master lying insensible on the floor. Not suspecting him to be wounded, he first lifted him up and threw water in his face, and it was not till he fetched the lamp from the adjoining room, that he perceived the blood ex-

tending over the bosom of the shirt. Upon this he summoned assistance from the other servants to lift the body to the bed, and then hastily dispatched the groom to Ellerton for Mr. Parkinson, the surgeon. Lionel having fainted, after the first gush, the blood ceased to flow; but whilst the servants stood by the bed with amazed faces, whispering their fears, he lay with his eyes shut, or, at least, when he opened them, appeared to take no notice of those around him. When the surgeon arrived, and had heard from Leighton, in a few words what he knew of the circumstance, he proceeded to an examination, which resulted in an opinion that the wound was not absolutely mortal,

"Who has been supping here?" inquired the surgeon; "this table has been laid for two."

"I don't know," answered Leighton; "I was desired to lay the cloth, and order supper; but I was not told who it was for."

"Your hands are stained with blood," observed the surgeon, looking him hard in the face.

"Very likely," replied the valet; "so were yours till you washed them. I lifted Mr. Grosvenor from the ground before I knew he was wounded; and the wristband of my shirt is stained, too, I see."

He said this with so much unconcern, that it in a great degree sufficed to disperse Mr. Parkinson's rising suspicions, who, however, now observed that the doors of the book-case were open, and several papers, some of which appeared to be bills and others letters, were strewn upon the floor.

"There has been a robbery, I suspect," said he.

"I don't see anything like it," answered Leighton, looking round the room. "Master was at the book-case himself this afternoon, and I dare say he left it open."

"Then who do you think has committed this attack?" asked the surgeon.

"I have no idea," replied the servant; "only I

... foot of a strang
my master's; besides, the person,
went out of the front door."

"Here is a lantern, too," said the
you any poachers or bad characters
"None that I know of, but the
know of some."

"It is an extraordinary thing t
not know who supped here."

"It is not the first time master ha
supper here and has bid me go to be
have their own ways, and it's not
servants to interfere with them. I
Mr. Grosvenor who his company w
he'd have kicked me out of the room."

Who shall describe the amazemen
the grief and agitation, that pervaded
ment in Brook Street, on the arrival
with his black budget of

the base blood of the Watsons. With all the speed that four horses and well-paid postilions could attain, the father and mother hurried down to Ravenscliffe, carrying with them the then eminent surgeon, Sir A—— C——, who was received by Mr. Parkinson on the steps of the Castle, and immediately conducted to the patient. All that Sir Francis said was, as they turned towards the tower:

"Let us know our fate as soon as you can. You'll find us in the library."

It was about a quarter of an hour afterwards, that Leighton opened the library door, and announced Sir A—— C——. Sir Francis and his wife were sitting side by side on a sofa, much in the attitude of two strangers who had been shown into an unknown room, and were expecting an unknown host; only that their wan cheeks and haggard features told of unrest and eating anguish; whilst their figures erect, their ears on the alert, their eyes fixed on the door, denoted their state of fearful expectation; but they spoke no word—there was no need to speak, for each knew the thoughts of the other. They did not even stir when the surgeon entered the room, and advanced towards them; they only looked, and waited for their doom.

"It is certainly a very serious wound—very

serious indeed," said he, with a grave countenance "but, at the same time, I don't see any absolute reason to despair. Great care will be necessary —"

"Oh, Sir A——, he shall have every care that the world can afford," cried Lady Grosvenor; "only preserve him to us."

And the surgeon having given his directions, and promised to return in a few days, during which interval he assured the anxious pair, that Mr. Parkinson would be fully equal to the charge of the patient, for whom indeed unbroken repose was the chief and best remedy, they fell to discussing the origin of the disaster; whereupon Mr. Parkinson related what he had observed and the suspicions

sult of which investigation fell like a thunderbolt on Leighton, who found himself accused of an intent to rob his master, and of having stabbed him to avoid detection.

This unexpected issue naturally changed his own tactics. It was quite true that he did not absolutely know who was to sup with his master, but he had a very shrewd guess. Cautious as the young couple had been, it was impossible altogether to escape the observations of a person so well acquainted with the ways of the world as Leighton was; and although he had not the most remote suspicion of the marriage, he was pretty well aware of the intimacy betwixt his master and Farmer Crawfurd's beautiful daughter. But, both in accordance with what he knew to be Mr. Grosvenor's wishes, and his own unwillingness to expose the girl, he had hitherto refrained from betraying them. Now, however, Agnes might become a very important witness in his favour; and having, therefore, disclosed his persuasion that she had been Lionel's guest on the evening in question, the officer, guided by the groom, started for the farm in search of her.

"You've a young woman here, called Agnes Crawfurd," said he; "is she at home?"

"She's not here," answered Mrs. Terry, the new tenant. "She went away from this the same night we came in; and her sister, as had engaged to live with us, went away three days ago, leaving us with not so much as a girl to milk the cows."

"Where's she gone?" inquired the officer.

"To Lunnun, to her sister, I fancy," answered the woman; but to what part of London she could not tell.

This sudden departure of Martha's following the disappearance of Agnes, seemed to involve the former in this tangled affair; and Leighton being taken into custody on suspicion, the next step was to discover the two young women; but this was not so easy. Nobody knew where Agnes had gone to

Agnes in his own mind, and accounted for her going to London by suggesting that it was probably to meet Mr. Grosvenor, who had intended proceeding thither immediately; whilst Martha's sudden departure he attributed to the news of what had happened at the Castle reaching the farm; indeed, when the hint was given her, Mrs. Terry herself confirmed this notion.

"No doubt that was it," she said. "The young woman seemed in a terrible way about it, and had gone off as soon as she could afterwards."

CHAPTER XIII.

Everybody knows the impossibili
taining the truth about anything tha
one's own neighbourhood; and it wi
occasion no surprise, that the news
Martha was to the effect, that Mr. G
dead; assassinated and robbed by n
who. Devoted to her sister with a
maternal, she felt that this was not
to be communicated by a letter; bes
was no great scribe, her accomplishr

I am afraid that Agnes's first feeling on seeing Martha step out of the coach was one of displeasure. "What can have induced my sister to follow me here?" she thought, as she looked round at her elegant apartment, and compared it with poor Martha's linsey-woolsey cloak and irretrievably plebeian air. "What will Lionel say?—What shall I do with her?" But the face that presently appeared at the drawing-room door, with the usually ruddy cheeks pale and disfigured by tears, changed the current of her feelings in a moment. She read in it bad news.

"Oh, Martha! what has happened? what has brought you up?"

"Wait, dear, a minute," said Martha, looking towards the door where the boy still stood.

"Shall I discharge the coach, Ma'am?" said he.

"Yes, yes; here's money—pay the man, and send him away!" said Agnes; "and now, what is it, Martha? For God's sake tell me! Is it anything about Lionel?"

"Well, it is, dear; but try and keep up, for you must know it, and it is better I should tell you than anybody else."

"They've found out that we're married?" said

it don't much signify if they do, Grosvenor has no cause to fear his and, perhaps, Sir Francis would ra married to you or to anybody else tha

"Than as he is? How is he? speak! Don't keep me in this suspe

"I don't know how to tell you, de you left that night a dreadful thir Some thieves broke into the castle, ar Mr. Grosvenor heard them, and got them away; but when Mr. Leighton stairs, he found all the drawers and b and his master bleeding!"

"Bleeding! where?" said Agnes, a chair.

"Here!" said Martha, placing her her heart.

"Martha, you don't mean to say that

fixed with amazement and dismay. Martha called for a glass of water for her, but she put it aside impatiently.

"My God! my God!" she exclaimed, at length. "Poor Lionel!—my poor husband!"

"Sir Francis and my Lady were sent for, and the carriage passed us this morning, with the four horses galloping as hard as they could go. I just got a sight of Sir Francis sitting in the corner, looking as if he'd got his death. Oh, what a shocking thing it is!" cried she, weeping.

"Dreadful! dreadful!" responded Agnes, in an under tone.

"I thought it better to come than write," said Martha, "for I couldn't tell what you would do."

"What, indeed!" said Agnes.

"I didn't know whether you would like to come back to Ellerton."

Agnes made no answer. Most women would have either fainted or have exhibited violent demonstrations of grief on receiving such an unexpected piece of ill news, but she did neither. She was assailed by a complication of feelings that left no room for the prominent manifestation of any one of them. She was very sorry for Lionel; but since her love for him had not been of an absorbing nature,

neither was her grief sufficiently so to exclude all other considerations—the downfall of her hopes and the drear futurity that awaited her, as well as the perplexity about what she should do or ought to do, divided her thoughts with her regrets. Like the very poor, who have too many other and urgent cares, to indulge in the luxury of woe, Agnes, prompted especially by Martha, whose eyes naturally turned in that direction, found herself ever and anon, wondering what was to become of her; and when at length tears had relieved her from the physical effects of the blow, the important question of what was to be done next, fell under discussion.

"I had rather never see Ellerton again," said

"and I could do the cleaning and cooking, and run seams, and such like."

"I wonder if we could get any work here in London," said Agnes. "If we knew anybody, may be we might."

"That reminds me of what Gibby said."

"Did you see him as you came up?"

"Yes: he came to the coach-door, and I spoke to him, and you may guess how surprised he was. And he told me that he had heard that Kitty, as used to live servant with us when we were children, had married a man that was waiter at the 'Horse and Hound,' and that they were settled in the public line, at a place called Kensington, not far from London."

"I remember Kitty very well," said Agnes; "but she wouldn't remember us. We've outgrown her knowledge."

"But she'd remember us when we told her who we were," said Martha; "and she might tell us if there would be any chance of your getting work in London—that is, if you don't like Ellerton."

"I couldn't bear going there now, and running the chance of seeing her Ladyship and the family;" said Agnes. "I had rather do anything than go to Ellerton."

"I wonder where Kensington is. Perhaps your boy could tell?" and Philip being summoned, and the distance and means of reaching it ascertained, it was arranged that Martha should go there on the following day; but in the meanwhile, a new subject of embarrassment occurred to Agnes. What was she to do with her house and her establishment?"

"I haven't money enough to pay the servants nor the rent, nor do I know what agreements were made about them. Lionel said that Mr. Conyers, his lawyer had settled it all; but I don't know where he lives."

It appeared on inquiry, however, that the servants were acquainted with the solicitor's address, they

the smooth pink and white satin skin had changed into a coarser texture, variegated with different shades of crimson.

"You don't remember me, Mrs. Bullock?" said Martha.

"I can't say as I do," returned the hostess.

"Don't you remember Martha Crawfurd, at the Holmes?" asked the other.

"Don't I? To be sure I do! But you don't mean to say you be she?"

"Yes, I am; you know you used to call me *Pudding*, because I was so fat and round."

"Lord o'Mighty! Come in!" said Mrs. Bullock, hospitably throwing wide the door of the bar. "Who'd ha' thought of seeing of you? And how did you leave all friends? How's the master, and—but maybe there's been trouble?" she added, suddenly remarking that Martha was in mourning.

"Father and Mother's both dead!" returned the latter, sadly, "and the farm's let to the Terrys, as used to live at Greenhills, and everything's changed since you left."

"And where be you living then, and your sister? She was a pretty creatur if ever there was 'un! Is she grown up as handsome as she were?"

"She's handsomer than ever, *I* think," said Martha.

"And how did you find me out? Did you hear I was married?"

"Not till yesterday. It was John Gibson told me—you remember John?"

"Don't I!" responded Mrs. Bullock, laughing; "I shan't never forget him the longest day I live, when he com'd from the work'us, first to see how he swallowed the broth. I thought he'd ha' swallowed spoon and all. They'd ha' kept him pretty sharp there, I fancy. And where's John living now?"

"He's at the 'Horse and Hound,' where your

:d," returned Martha. "Times have been so bad, d the farm required so much to be laid out upon that he could scarce pay his rent from year to ar. I sometimes think it was a mercy God lmighty took him away afore he came to want."

"It's a sad thing to want!" answered Mrs. Bullock; "partickler for them as has seen better days. Bullock and I had a hard struggle to get along at first. Howsever, thanks be to God, we're doing pretty well now. And where be you stopping in Lunnun?"

This was a question Martha had not prepared herself for; and not liking the prospect of a visit from Mrs. Bullock in Park Lane, since her sister's real situation could not be explained, she answered, on the spur of the moment, that they were with a friend, adding that she had come to Kensington with the view of taking a lodging and seeking work.

"My sister's a first-rate dressmaker and milliner," answered Martha. "She lived maid at the Castle under Mrs. Bennett for two years, and I could do the plain sewing and the house-work, if you think we could get to be employed."

"There's so many of every trade," replied Mrs. Bullock, "that it's hard for them as is out to get in. Howsever, it so happens that Miss

Wright as worked for me has gone into a decline, and the doctor's advised her to go home to her friends as lives at Dawlish, so that there's a sort of vacancy, as a body may say, and you might take her lodging, which is just two doors off from here."

"Will it be cheap?" inquired Martha anxiously.

"As cheap as anything you can get," returned Mrs. Bullock; "and I'll give you a new silk I've got to make up, for a hansel. I bought it in the city the last time I was there: but poor Miss Wright was so bad that she was never able to put a hand to it."

Martha said she would not settle anything without consulting her sister; and after inspecting the

pay them; and as they do not know anything about me, nor even my real name, nobody will be able to find out what has become of me."

In pursuance of this plan, Martha returned to Kensington on the following morning, and took the lodging; and in the evening, having packed up their small possessions, they ordered a coach to the door, and stepped into it.

Where shall I tell him to drive?" inquired Philip.

"To where the Exeter mail goes from," answered Agnes; "and you need not go with us, Philip."

When they reached Piccadilly, they stopped the coach, and directed the man to Kensington. Two small rooms on a third floor, in a shabby house, formed a disagreeable contrast to the elegant lodging in Park Lane; and yet Agnes felt relieved that she had got away from it and the equivocal position that the death of her husband had placed her in. Here she could weep his fate and her own disappointed hopes in privacy. However humble her condition, her feelings would not be abraded by aristocratic contact, and nobody would have a right to trouble her with questions which she could not answer, nor counsel that she did not choose to follow.

CHAPTER XIV.

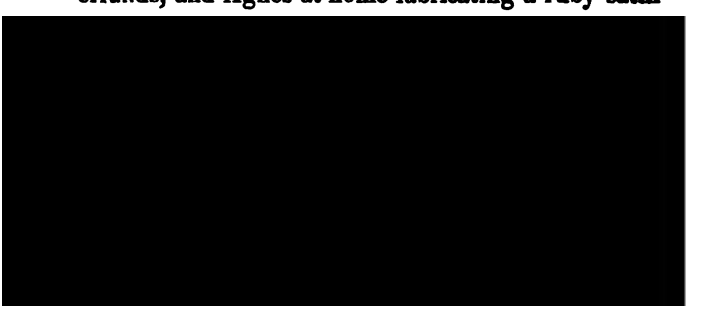
Agnes made up the silk dress to perfection, and was not long in obtaining further custom amongst the *clientelle* of her predecessor; so that, with the

to regret the extinction of her hopes than the absence of any real enjoyments connected with the position her marriage gave her, or should have given her; whilst the independence of her present situation and her dislike to service, made her much better pleased to be a dressmaker in Kensington than a domestic at Ravenscliffe. In short, Agnes being much more proud and fastidious than ambitious, was, on the whole, somewhat relieved by escaping the mortifications and contrasts that had attended her intercourse with the castle; whilst the loss of rank and fortune entailed by the death of Lionel, was almost compensated by her escape from all the contempt and obloquy she knew would be flung upon her, if the connection should be discovered during the lifetime of Sir Francis.

The pride that would have rejoiced in the honours and privileges of ladyhood, shrunk from the apparent meanness of attaining them surreptitiously; and though by no means unusually timid, she would have infinitely preferred living in poverty and obscurity, to braving unprotected the storm that, under present circumstances, would have greeted her presentation as Mrs. Lionel Grosvenor. It may also be added, that either the instinctive penetration of her sex, or the knowledge of the world she had

acquired through her intercourse at the castle, had not left her altogether ignorant of Lionel's real character. She was aware that it wanted solidity and self-dependance; and she had not that entire reliance on the strength of his attachment that might have enabled her to encounter the future without misgivings. It was this combination of feelings and reflections, that armed her with fortitude to endure the reverse that had befallen her; but what she endured with considerably less patience were the civilities of her patroness Kitty, and those of her other customers. She was reconciled to live by toil, and pass her days in obscurity; but to be forced into the company of these coarse and uncongenial women, was a severe trial; and to escape the annoyance, she confined herself almost wholly to the house whilst her sister performed all the out-door duties of their little *ménage*.

Martha was one evening abroad on some of these errands, and Agnes at home fabricating a ruby satin



to the indignation and resentment of her husband's family, she waited with some anxiety to see who was her visitor, and her satisfaction was considerable when, on opening the door, she perceived it was no other than her old friend John Gibson.

"Oh Gibby, how glad I am to see you! Come in. Martha will be home directly."

"I was afear'd I shouldn't find you in this here big place," said John wiping his brow as he laid aside his cap. "But I thought Kitty might know whereabouts you was."

"And what has brought you to London, Gibby?"

"Oh! that be a long story," answered John; "but it wer' mainly to seek you."

"Well, I'm heartily glad to see you," said Agnes, sighing. "Little we thought what had happened at Ravenscliffe when we parted that night. Poor Lionel! what a dreadful thing it was! who could have done it?"

"They say it was Mr. Leighton, the valet, as wanted to rob the house," answered John.

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Agnes; "and does he own to it?"

"No," answered John. "He says he heard a

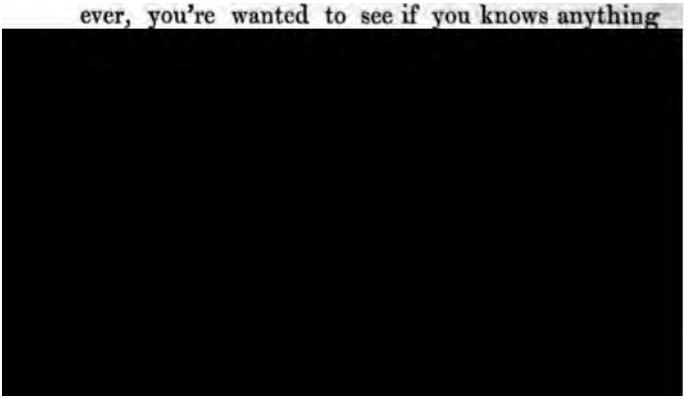
noise below and a man's foot going out at the front door, and that when he came down to see what was the matter, he found his master lying a bleeding on the floor."

"What time of the night was it?" asked Agnes, recollecting the person that had followed her out.

"It must ha' been just after you left," said John.

"I thought they had not known it till the morning," said she; "but if it was then it happened, the person that went by whilst we were waiting at the milestone may have been one of them; for I think it was he that passed me as I crossed the broad walk, just as I left the castle."

"I remember somebody passing us, but I could'nt say I saw much on him," said John. "However, you're wanted to see if you knows anything



"But stay, Gibby," said Agnes gasping for breath, and laying her hand on her bosom—"stay! Martha told me Mr. Grosvenor was dead."

"Well, he be very bad, and the doctors don't know whether he'll get well or not," answered John; "an as nobody know'd where you was, I thought maybe Martha might ha' been to see Kitty, as I told her where she lived, and sure enough that was the way I found you out."

According to John's information, advertisements in the newspapers and various other methods had been used to discover Agnes and her sister, and amongst the rest, application had been made to him; but in the first place, he was ignorant of Agnes's address in London, and in the second had he known it, he would not have thought himself at liberty to disclose the secret; till at length his own desire to see her, and the apprehensions he entertained that this affair might result in something fatal to her interests, induced him to seek her himself.

"Then Sir Francis and my Lady have no suspicion that we are married?" said Agnes, when she had listened to all that John Gibson could tell her.

"None that I know, nor Mr. Leighton either,"

...ed figures clasping her hands in dis
some minutes her mind was so eng
momentous question, that she forgo
other ligaments that entangled her
That her husband still lived was cert
intelligence, but his precarious cor
much rejoicing on that head; whilst
her own situation, the circumstance
infinitely more difficult and perplexin
she supposed him dead. The step s
in flying from Park Lane, and the n
adopted to support herself, however jus
the latter supposition, would no doubt
pleasing to Lionel; though she did not
could repair the error now, nor indeed
could have done, unless she had tak
Ellerton: where, if Mr. Grosvener r
dress-making would have been much m

and withhold her evidence, would be so manifestly unjust, that painful as it was, she made known to Leighton, that if her presence was absolutely necessary, she was willing to come forward. A few days after this, a stranger waited upon her, saying his name was Evans, and that he wished to take her evidence with respect to what she had observed on a certain night at Ravenscliffe Castle; and after some preliminary conversation, he proceeded to put such questions as he thought necessary.

When he had elicited all the information she could give, and informed her what more would be required of her, Mr. Evans took his departure, leaving her overcome with annoyance and mortification. It is true, he had said nothing offensive, but she was conscious that he could put but one construction on her visit to the castle; and although during the interview she had endeavoured to maintain as much calmness and dignity as possible, she felt that her burning cheeks and unsteady eye must confirm the ill-impression. Martha found her in tears.

"Troubles are thickening upon me," said she; "and if Lionel does not get soon well, I don't know what is to become of us."

"Why?" asked Martha, who judged from her

dear to tell you,
"I have hoped I might be mis
grant I may be! But suppose I
pose I should be—"

"Be what?" asked Martha. "
tinued, as the truth suddenly o
"you don't say so!" and inst
alarmed, her countenance brightene
Mr. Grosvenor will be, if he recov

"Ay, but if he does not?"

"Well, dear, we must hope for t
as well as we can; and sure, if t
you'll say you're married to him.
you bear the shame, when you don't

"I was thinking so, too," ret
"but how can I disobey Lionel? h
give me. And if he died, how coul
I was married?"

being able to appear in court his evidence was taken privately, as far as he had any to give, or was able to give it. It amounted, indeed, to very little, being merely to the effect, that hearing a noise in the dressing-room, he had gone thither to ascertain what occasioned it; and by the imperfect light had discovered the figure of a man, who was at the moment hastening out of the opposite door. That having seized him, a struggle had ensued, which terminated by his finding himself struck by some sharp instrument in the breast. He did not believe the man intended to injure him, but thought he had done it to avoid being taken. As to who it was, the light was so faint, and the whole encounter so sudden and rapid, that he was unable to form any opinion on the subject.

Nevertheless, he had one, which he privately avowed, but which he did not wish should be produced in evidence; and this was, that the intruder was Leighton, who, aware that he had some one supping with him, had concealed himself to ascertain who it was, and to listen to the conversation. He, moreover, suspected what he did *not* avow; namely, that his servant had somehow or other got wind of the marriage, and had been desirous of ascertaining the fact for himself. This sup-

ment he entertained for her merite
was not of a nature to withstand di
although for the first few days, whe
he was going to die, he had resolv
the secret to his father before he quit
he no sooner found himself likely
he was as desirous of keeping it as e
the truth, he felt that at present h
little about Agnes; and as he lay i
demned to almost unbroken silence l
sician, with no diversion but his own re
he almost wondered what had posse
marry her. Still, there were mome
ings, and in one of these he sent fo
the butler, and bade him write to M
requesting that gentleman to call in Pa
furnish whatever was necessary, till fi
tions. No answer hein[illegible]

him; and his father and mother never quitted the castle. As soon as he was able, it was recommended to remove him to a warm climate, and in the meantime he was condemned to the silence and solitude of his own apartment.

As it was understood that there was no robbery, and that the wounded gentleman was not likely to die, the interest excited by the trial of Leighton was less than might have been expected. He, of course, pleaded *not guilty*, but as he had no witness of any importance to produce but Agnes, the presumption was so strong against him, that he was convicted, and condemned to two years' imprisonment, and of course irretrievable loss of character. To his witness the consequences of the trial were not much less disastrous; every ignominious insinuation and open insult that her questionable position laid her open to, being lavished on her by the prosecutor's counsel, who not only arraigned her character as a woman, but impeached the truth of her evidence, accusing her of connivance with the criminal, whose object he assumed to have been robbery; in short, availing himself to its fullest extent of that horrible and infamous license of tongue that occasionally disgraces the profession.

Unable to vindicate herself without betraying the

was [illegible] from the court and placed in
[illegible] and her sister. When t
Kensington, she was put to bed; a s
ensued, and the first thing she learnt
very was, that Lionel had been carried
his breakfast by his father and mother. J
e was that had heard the news from a
ance of his, who had brought up some o
owner's horses to be sold at Tattersall's.

CHAPTER XV.

INEXPERIENCED people in perplexing situations, and experienced ones too, sometimes are apt to remember too late what they ought to have done; and when Agnes was convalescent, and she and Martha able to discuss their affairs, it occurred to them that they should have dispatched John Gibson to Ravenscliffe as soon as they heard that Lionel was alive. John might have obtained an interview, delivered a letter, and brought Mr. Grosvenor's directions for the conduct of his wife. But this plan had not occurred to them; Agnes did not dare to send a letter by the post, lest it should fall into hands it was not designed for, and concluding that if the injury did not prove fatal, her husband would shortly recover, and be able to com-



gained.

"Gibby must get his addres
and I must write directly. I wi
left that house he took for me."

"It was all my fault," saic
hadn't been in such a hurry, I
the truth."

"Is there any work in the
I could do a little."

"There isn't any," answered M
pose people knew you were ill,
none come in since you was laid up

"But there's Mrs. Green's Irish
is it?"

"She sent for it away," said Mart
she couldn't wait."

"You had better call and say I an
to work now," said Agnes: "for I'm

did more important work; but no work came in, and they began to fear that somebody had seduced away their customers; but when Martha called on Kitty, she learned the real reason of the deficiency, namely, the disclosures that had been made at the trial—they could not employ a person of Miss Crawfurd's character.

Mrs. Bullock was very sorry, and disposed to defend her protégées; but the distance and reserve with which Agnes had treated the women that employed her, had embittered their virtue, and rendered it inexorable. Moreover, the woman of the house they lodged in gave them warning, and it became a grave question where they should go.

Ellerton, which would have been a certain refuge, because certain to supply them with employment, was now out of the question; and they were at their wits' ends for the means to live through the impending event. At length, it occurred to Agnes that if she could obtain the address of that Mr. Conyer, who had been employed by her husband to take the house for her, that he might provide her with funds, and also write to Lionel about her himself; and John Gibson, who, not to be separated from them, had procured a situation in London, undertook to discover him. In the meantime, Kitty

showed them many kindnesses, and she even gave
Agnes some little articles that had been provided
for a similar event, in her own case.

"Her beauty had been a snare to her," she said,
"and it was very wrong of her Ladyship to
having her so much at the Castle, where there was
always harum-scarum young gentlemen rampaging
up and down; and anybody might have expected
things to turn out as they'd done."

Many a time Agnes felt disposed to confide
her, but she was as much deterred by the impossi-
bility of establishing the fact of her marriage, as
the apprehension of irrevocably offending Lion
She fancied the whole story would appear so improb-
bable, that she could not expect it to be believed
and to be supposed capable of inventing it, would
be more grievous and mortifying than to lay under
the odium that now oppressed her.

After a short interval, John Gibson brought
Mr. Conyer's address; and Agnes, urged by the
necessities of her situation, overcame her reluctance
and taking Martha with her, drove to his house in
a hackney-coach. Mr. Conyers was engaged at the
moment, but hearing that a lady, attended by a
maid, desired to see him, he sent word he would
wait upon her in a few minutes. Accordingly,

shortly presented himself, with his best bow and smoothest apologies for the delay; he was quite oppressed with business; he had just come from the Marquis of Harcourt, and was going to Lord Glengrove; but he had hastened to her the moment he could, and begged to know what he could do to serve her.

"I believe, Sir, you know Mr. Lionel Grosvenor?"

"Extremely well. I have had the pleasure of knowing the family for many years, and have done a good deal of business for Sir Francis."

"I believe, Sir, it was you that engaged a house for Mr. Grosvenor, in Park Lane?"

"Hem! Yes, I believe I did," answered Mr. Conyers, with a scarcely perceptible change of manner. "He wrote to me to say, that, finding it inconvenient to reside always with his family in Brook Street, he wished to have a separate establishment."

"Then he has probably not mentioned me at all," thought Agnes; "and how am I to explain the truth? And if I do, would he believe me?"

She felt quite discouraged; her heart sunk within her, and she wished she had not come; but

for me that house was taken," she co
a desperate effort. "Mr. Grosvenor
joined me there in a few days, but the
happened prevented him; and having
neously informed that he was dead,
now I am at a loss what to do, since
Grosvenor is gone abroad."

It was certainly an awkward story, w
cohesion which the omitted incident of t
could alone give it. It was evident that l
thought so.

"And what do you wish me to do, Ma
asked.

Agnes would have liked to say, "Prot
my husband comes to my aid;" but sh
the appeal would be in vain, so she limi
to a request that he would write to Mr.
telling him where she was: "And inde

depressed by the cold, dry manner of the lawyer, she took her leave, promising to send him her letter, which she did; but it travelled no farther than to his desk.

"A beautiful creature, certainly! But why lead the young man into further expenses?" He had had a good deal to pay for the establishment in Park Lane already, when the servants informed him that the gentleman had never arrived, and the lady had gone away. It is true, he had received Mr. Wighting's letter, containing Lionel's request; but Agnes's disappearance, according to his conception of the case, had abrogated any claim she might have on him. Mr. Grosvenor was now abroad, with no prospect of an early return, and to break off the connection was the best thing that could be done, and no doubt what he himself would desire; and with the views Mr. Conyers entertained of the affair, it was natural that he should think so.

Agnes went home more than ever dispirited. If no answer came, what was she to do? She had nobody to advise her; there was not a person in the world she could reckon on as a friend except John Gibson and her sister, both more ignorant of the world than herself. They were obliged to quit their lodgings, and the period of her confinement

... marriage to Mr. Con
own sake merely she would not hav
would prefer to have endured hards
but she was beginning to feel the te
of maternal love. Her child must n
her poverty; it must be gently nurt
lodged, and provided for; so, when
interval had elapsed, she resolved to re
to Saville Row.

The servant said his master was at h
was shown into the same room as be
he made his appearance, however, a
was waiting for him, she judged, from
countenance and distant salutation,
known who he was to see, she would n
admitted. He said he was very busy,
come from the Marquis of Harcourt, an
to Lord Glengrove, and begged to kno

place any reliance in that quarter. Mr. Grosvenor is in a very precarious state of health in consequence of the wound he received, and I question if he is likely to be in a condition to trouble himself about anything for a long time to come. You had better, I think, divest your mind of any expectation of hearing further from him."

"But Mr. Grosvenor is my husband, Sir; I am married to him," said Agnes, surprised into a confession by alarm and indignation.

"I beg your pardon, Madam," said he; "I was not aware—"

"Mr. Grosvenor wished me to keep our marriage secret, Sir, and that was why I didn't mention it the last time I was here; but it is absolutely necessary he should know where I am, and how I am situated."

Mr. Conyers could not tell whether to believe her or not. The thing was so improbable, that on the whole he inclined to suppose she was deceiving him. He expressed his surprise that Mr. Grosvenor should not have mentioned the fact to him, and inquired when and where the ceremony had taken place. When he had heard all she could tell him, he made up his mind that she had been hoaxed—deceived by a false marriage; and the tone of the letter dic-

till you hear further from me, &
can't be the way he'd write if she
wife! However, he did not think
tell Agnes his opinion, lest he shoul
but, under all the circumstances, h
not be wrong in acting on the letter
could not do when he received it, she
quitted the house. So he said, with
than he had hitherto spoken, that
tainly write to Mr. Grosvenor, an
meantime, if she was in want of m
advance her twenty pounds.

Agnes accepted the offer, and went
that she had avowed the marriage,
promising to let her know as soon as
answer from Paris.

They now removed to a lodging in
taken for them by John Gibson. who

as to what it would be prudent to do. Sir Francis was a valuable client *in esse*, and Lionel an equally valuable one *in posse*. He did not wish to offend either. Such a marriage as this in question, supposing it to be a *bonâ-fide* one, would drive the father mad; whilst, as regarded the son, there seemed to be no manifestations of affection or devotion to excuse or account for it. If he were well enough to travel to Paris, he must have been well enough to write, and to take such measures as were necessary for his wife's safety and convenience. Besides, was it likely he would have allowed her to come forward, and give her evidence in a public court, exposed to all the misconstructions and insolence such an appearance was sure to entail?

When he thought of this last circumstance, he was confirmed in his persuasion that there was no legal marriage in the case. Agnes was either deceiving him, or herself deceived. It was probable that she did not really believe in the validity of the ceremony, but had accepted the semblance of a marriage as a salvo to her pride or her conscience; and was equally probably that Mr. Grosvenor was ad of the opportunity, that his illness and subquent departure furnished for shaking off the umbrance. He knew him to be weak and vacil-

therefore, that he would adhere,
worse, to a connection so contracted,
as Agnes's retreat from Park Lane,
yers had mentioned, in answer to W
went far to justify its relinquishmen
cared for her, he would have bid m
get her back," was the natural concl

All these considerations induced hi
days for deliberation, before he wrot
in the interim, a piece of intelligenc
that whilst it seemed to settle the
marriage in the negative, decided
course he should pursue.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sir Francis and his family were established in an hotel in the Champs Elysées, near the Arc de l'Etoile. They ought to have been on their way to the South; at least, it was with that intention they had left home, but circumstances had modified their plans.

Young Lord Minevar was dead; and the mother and daughter, the latter now one of the richest matches in England, was in Paris. The death of the young man had been anticipated, and Georgina had been for some time, in the mind of Sir Francis and his wife, the selected bride of their son. When they found Lady Minevar and her daughter in the Place Vendome, they persuaded themselves that Lionel was so much better, that it was needless to go

... s, the Honourabl
one of those quiet, sensible, useful
are treasures to the families they b
had, however, had little opportunit
her functions at Ravenscliffe, where
was not sufficiently appreciated to
veted; whilst she, on the other han
by a powerful interest in another di
lover of her youth had died, and left t
sisters—young, beautiful, and consu
she had proved her devotion to his
consecrating her life to their service, as
were upon the earth to need it. Dea
her from this tie; and when a tender
nurse was required for Lionel—one wh
weary of watching—Dorothy Dacres wa
Ravenscliffe.

Lady Grosvenor was too delicate, l

accordance with the dignity of the family than the extent of it, the young married people—the Inghams and Damers—broke up their own little establishments, and came to reside with their father. Here the Minevars also spent a great part of their time; and Georgina, whom, in the unsophisticated days of their childhood, the young Grosvenors had all disliked, or, as they termed it, *hated,* was now their particular friend; yet she had grown up very much what her early years had promised, that is, a plain, ailing, ill-conditioned young woman; but they were unconsciously influenced by her immense wealth, and the numerous advantages it gave her. Louisa and Frances entered fully into the scheme of their parents, and wished to see her married to Lionel; and Lionel, though he did not like her much better than he had done formerly, considered her fortune highly desirable. Idle and uncultivated, he had no amusement or pursuit in the world but to spend money; and as he reclined on the sofa, turning over the leaves of a French novel, it was astonishing what innumerable modes of dissipating a fortune presented themselves to his mind.

It is needless to say, that since the discovery of Agnes's intimacy with the brother, her name was never uttered by the ladies, at least in his presence,

pale and proud she had appeared be
vile did she appear now. It always is
of letting people's good conduct bala
their virtue is set down as an aggrav
vice.

There could be no doubt that Agn
had for a long time been unexceptionab
the worse for her now. Nobody had
her but Isabel, and she was snubbed fo
taining a more lively sense of propriety;
extremely romantic notions of love, all
mitted in the name of that deity wo
passion. The whole affair—at least, all t
it in which Agnes was concerned—wa
concealed from Georgina, who, when she
had become of that "impudent little girl!
that she had turned out very bad; to
answered, that "she had always expected

upon the ceremony that had been performed, as a sort of mystification — a little bit of private theatricals, got up, with the assistance of his two friends, for his own particular convenience.

He could hardly believe that Agnes looked upon it herself in any other light; and her going away from the house he had taken for her, and making no further claim on him, seemed to imply that she did not; at the same time, that it released him from any duty towards her. He brought himself to consider her very much as his parents and sisters did; and to take that view, both soothed his conscience and released him from anxiety.

He raised no objection to the proposed alliance with Georgina Minevar, except some slight ones, on the score of not liking her, which were not considered valid, and which indeed he did not insist on; so that everything proceeded conformably to the wishes of Sir Francis, Lionel's ill health being the only obstacle to a more rapid development of the plot; till a hint from Mr. Conyers alarmed the Baronet, and caused him to write for further explanations.

This hint was given after the second interview with Agnes, and in answer to a letter from Sir Francis, wherein he first intimated the prospect

... might nevertheless give
inconvenience if not settled. It w
something that should prevent her
cations, or preclude her cherishing
she had claims on Mr. Grosvenor;
Sir Francis's inquiries by giving a
of what had passed, and recommend
ever was necessary should be pr
approaching confinement; adding,
woman would then have her livin
allowance should be made for the chi
be put into some way of earning
sistence; the whole, however, on con
staining from further demands, and so

On perusing these details, Sir Fra
a violent passion, and was preparing
fury on his son, when the mother
prevent him.

in that way; but no doubt she wished to be deceived. Of course, Agnes Crawfurd was not such a fool, as to suppose Lionel really intended to marry her. But bad as it is, it will only be making it worse to speak to him about it. No doubt he thinks she has gone off with somebody else, and he's quite content to get rid of her; but if he heard the contrary, and that she's in the family way, one can't tell what effect it might have on him. I wouldn't say that it mightn't lead to a renewal of the connection. Leave well alone, and write to Conyers to settle it, and get rid of her and the child the best way he can."

Mr. Conyers was not exactly a dishonest man, but he was devoted to the service of his aristocratic clients, and he had a supple conscience. He by no means approved of Lionel's frolic; it was not only immoral, but what was worse, illegal and extremely dangerous. However, the affair standing as it did, he considered that in sending for Agnes, and persuading her to accept the proposed terms, he was doing the best thing for all parties concerned. Still, the indignation and amazement she exhibited on the thing being hinted, somewhat shocked and alarmed him. He saw she had really been deceived, if deception

...ing as much, and advising h
further into the business. But the
Lady Georgina was advancing rapi
able issue, and Conyers was desire
the woman and child on any term
Agnes Crawfurd, that she should
them and their plans, or be cons
What was proposed to be done "w
she had any right to expect. She
clever, and knew very well what
about, Mr. Conyers might rely on it
know her as well as they did, &c. &c.'

Mr. Conyers did as he was desi
Agnes to suppose that she was the
false marriage—it was not very diffi
did not know what constituted a le
did not attempt to justify such froli
very wrong, indeed. The only won

at Court, present her to his friends, or place her at the head of his table? She must see that the idea of such a thing was sheer absurdity, and that she would be the laughing stock of society. He expected that she would have threatened legal proceedings, and reckoned on having to buy her off, but no such notion occurred to her. She did not know that she could do it; and she would not have done it, if she had been aware of the power. Had she been vulgarly ambitious she probably would, but that was not the sin whereby she fell. She would have been happy to be really a lady born and bred; to have enjoyed all the privileges, and be surrounded by all the elegancies belonging to that condition, and to have escaped the contumelies and contaminations of a lower grade; but indecently to force herself into the ranks that closed against her, to make her *entrée* into good society, amidst the laughter and the ridicule of that aristocracy, which her early habits had led her to envy, admire and reverence; and to live a life of humiliation and abasement in the midst of splendour, was a fate that had no temptation for her; whilst she would have shrunk with horror from the idea of presenting herself again in a

through ignorance and inexperience ha
ferently; but she had seen enough of t
able world to comprehend somethin
humanities, and to retain her own self
poverty and obscurity, was a thousand
ferable to putting them to the test.
swallowed her wrongs with a protest.
no appeal to Mr. Grosvenor's honour or
but she requested Mr. Conyers to say
Lionel, knew very well that she had bee
and that if she had not believed her
married, she should not have been in
tion she then was. "I suppose, Sir, h
deny that the child is his; and if I t
his money, it is only for his child I
have no means of maintaining it at p
I have no right to deny it the suppor
is bound to give it."

ancis would never let the boy want; as he spoke : put his fingers into its cheeks as it lay sleeping n Martha's bosom, whose tears dropt fast upon its ace. Agnes shed none, but her complexion was as white as marble as she answered, that she hoped her child would be able to get his own living in a few years, and not be dependant on those who disowned him.

That evening was passed by the sisters in forming plans for their future subsistence, as well as for the disposal of the child; and John Gibson who came at night to inquire how Agnes was, was called into council. When he was told the news, he could not believe it. He was sceptical as to the existence of such an amount of wickedness in the first place, and in the second, he could not conceive what mortal man could desire beyond such a wife as Agnes, to him, the *beau idéal* of all perfections. The most beautiful, the most virtuous, the most amiable of women; for amiable and kind he had always found her. She was a duchess—a princess —in his estimation and yet he, Gibby, as she called him still, was always her welcome friend. She knew his worth, and his devotion, and her pride was not of that vulgar kind that would have undervalued or despised them; neither was there any

...ensemble as for Agnes, and wh
tinued on those terms of perfect fa
apparent equality that had originated
he considered her as far removed beyo
as if she had been a goddess.

I have not undertaken to represe
suffering severely from wronged affectio
tain that Lionel Grosvenor had never fo
into the deep recesses of her heart. Wh
of love might have been hidden there f
who could reach them, those sweet fount
not for him. He had never gone the ri
unseal them. He had never been able
his consciousness, that he was a gentlem
a farmer's daughter. He had made hi
to her for three years, by fits and starts,
vals of evident hesitation and repentan
there was a repeated backsliding and l

he deception that had been practised upon her, the cruel position it had placed her in. What, felt, would be the use of telling people that she been deceived by a pretended marriage? Even hey believed her, they would only laugh at her y in supposing it could have been a real one. She ferred concealing the fact to encountering the greableness, that might ensue from disclosing it.

"We can say your husband's dead," said rtha.

"Then they'll want to know who my husband s," said Agnes. "I must take some other name, d I must have a name for my child. I must'nt l him after his father, and I would'nt if I might. shall never know who his father was; and nember Gibby, you never tell him, nor you rtha. If I die let him believe that I was rried, and that he lost his father in his infancy, that he hasn't a relation in the world except two."

What name do you mean to call him when he's stened," asked John.

Call him after father, Daniel Crawfurd," said tha.

No, I won't," said Agnes, "for that's only her way of telling whose son he is, if any body

"Then I'll call him William
Agnes; and after some further d
agreed that she should pass as th
deceased William; and as it was at
sary that they should move into ch
they entered on their new domicile
widow, and her sister. The next th
to find work; and here, again, John
angel. He had an ally at the Ad
the person of Sarah Peddie, the ho
had interest enough with her mist
some employment for John's sister-in
with the liberal allowance made for
were able to ward off distress; whilst
of maintaining themselves, the siste
necessity of separating themselves fr
an important consideration to both,
that had not

pride and hardness that had been the faults of of Agnes's character, were subdued and mellowed by this wholesome influence. She had hitherto encouraged and cherished a morbid sentiment of isolation: if she had loved her sister, it was with a certain reserve—as one who could not enter into her feelings, nor understand her thoughts; and she had found herself in the disagreeable position of having no equal—everybody was above or below her. But now she had a subject of unfailing interest, that Martha could participate and comprehend. She was linked to society by a chain that ramified in all directions, and which brought near those who had been far from her. She had heretofore seen nothing but herself in the world; now, she only saw herself, as necessary to her child. All her hopes and fears were for him; if his cheek was fevered, as he slept, she felt as if the earth was overshadowed with a cloud; if the dew of health was on his brow, the heavens were all sunshine. In short, she forgot to think of her wrongs, or to accuse them. How could she bewail the source of that sweet life!

CHAPTER XVII.

WHILST the character of Agnes wa
and the true heir of Ravenscliffe was
his babyhood, and flourishing exc
the obscure name of William G
Georgina Minevar had changed her
venor, and had also become the m
a sickly child; but an object of i
to his grandfather and grandmothe

It was not to be expected, that a
under such auspices would be of a

passed away, seldom quitted her room till the middle of the day, by which time Lionel, though by no means an early riser either, was over head and ears in what he called business; that is, he was inventing and putting in practice various modes of spending money. In the afternoon she drove in one carriage and he in another, or he rode. They frequently dined at the same table at home or abroad, when she occasionally heard how much he had given for an *objet*, or for a new carriage or a new horse; subjects in which she took little interest. A physician called daily, for she was never well enough to dispense with one; and his visit always extended to the nursery, where the young Francis squalled and kicked in embroidered cambric and Mechlin lace. As for Lionel, he did not see the child from one week's end to another; Lady Georgina saw it every morning; but the intense selfishness engendered by always thinking of her health rendered her an indifferent parent; added to which, the infant, seeming to share its mother's peculiarity, appeared to be generally too much engrossed with its own personal sufferings to be able to make itself agreeable to its visitors. Thus the child formed no bond of union or common interest

betwixt them; and it was perhaps fortunate; for if they had united in an interest they would have quarrelled about it; for Georgina had a peevish, obstinate temper; and Lionel was always run away with by his own caprice and its indulgence, which he was never disposed to sacrifice to anybody else's. Thus their indifference about everything but their own individual personalities was their security, and the foundation on which peace subsisted betwixt them.

"I cannot conceive how two people can call themselves husband and wife, and care so little for each other as Lionel and Georgina do," said Louisa Langham. "I can understand not loving one's husband; that's quite simple; but then I should hate him, or at least dislike him exceedingly."

"Well, I think indifference and peace are better than love and war," said Mrs. Damer, as she took up her netting.

"I suppose that is a hit at me?" said Louisa.

"I really almost agree with Frances," said Miss Dacres. "I do wonder you persist in contradicting your husband as you do, Louisa."

"But good gracious, aunt! when I know he is entirely mistaken!"

"Of course you think he is mistaken, and he thinks otherwise; that is the foundation of all disputes."

"But he *is* mistaken," interrupted Louisa. "I don't think it; I know it."

"It's just a question of which of you heard most correctly," said Miss Dacres. "But what does the thing signify? Is it worth an argument?"

"What does anything signify?" exclaimed Frances, languidly.

"What does anything signify?" reiterated Louisa; "why I suppose you thought it signified whether you went to the *bal masqué* or not, or else you would not have persisted in going when you knew William Damer wished you to stay at home."

"Well, but I didn't argue about it, did I?" said Frances.

"No, but you went without arguing," replied Louisa. "Now I should like to know which is the worst, to contradict a man when he is wrong, or to go and do a thing in direct opposition to his wishes. Words are but words, at all events."

"Still they have made many a wound that could never be healed," said Miss Dacres.

"Here comes Isabel, looking daggers at me,"

[illegible] to her eyes, "How c
[illegible] Henry in the way you do?"

"Oh, Henry!" exclaimed Louis
quarter! There's no bearing this!
me next! I shall expect to hear
she's dressing my hair, exclaim,
Langham! how could you be so cr
tradict that sweet young gentleman, I

"And I'm sure it's enough to
answered Isabel. "How any one c
vexing a person they love, in that mai
conceive."

"What nonsense you talk, Isabel,
Langham; "I don't delight in vexin
would think you were speaking of
instead of a man."

"But you know, Louisa, men are
contradiction," replied Isabel, "and

I should not recommend you to undertake the office of preceptress."

"And why not?" returned Mrs. Langham. "The liberty I take, I mean to give. All I ask is that independence which I think the right of every human being—independence of opinion, mind, I mean; not of action. In action, I think, a wife is bound to obey her husband; but thought is free."

"Certainly," answered Frances, "as long as you keep it to yourself."

"There's the first dinner-bell, young ladies," said Miss Dacres.

"Louisa," said Isabel, throwing her arm round her sister's neck, and detaining her, as she was leaving the room, "do go and make friends with poor Henry before you go to dress. I have been watching him from the window, and he's walking backwards and forwards on the terrace, looking the picture of wretchedness."

"What nonsense!" said Mrs. Langham. "Why should he look wretched, because I happen to differ with him in opinion?"

A few hours subsequent to this conversation, the family party, with the addition of one or two visitors, were all assembled in the *salle à manger*, except Henry Langham, who, under the influence of irrita-

— cheeks, and brilliant in beauty
talking with her brother-in-law,
near the head of the table. Isabel,
lower end, made a sign to him t
by her.

"I have reserved a place for you,'

"Thank you," he answered; '
kind." As he dropped into it wi
fortable consciousness that he coul
his countenance to look either ha
rent.

"There's Louisa nodding to yo
and, raising his eyes, he saw his wi
ing on him with the most perfect
Henry forced a smile, and tried t
humoured too, but he had the mortifi
ing he did not succeed.

"How well she is looking! Is sh

length succeeded in accomplishing, his wife's good looks aiding not a little. It was pleasant to call so much brilliancy and beauty his own—so entirely his own—for Louisa never excited his jealousy; she never flirted, or played with her power. She really loved her husband, and she would have scorned to palter with his dignity or her own, by accepting, or feigning to accept, the homage of any man upon earth. So this light cloud fleeted by, as many such had done before; and the evening was passed away by the ladies in the interesting discussion of what they should wear at a *déjeúner champêtre*, about to be given by the Duc de Rivoli; expected to be the most superb thing of the season. The most charming bonnets, dresses, and mantelets, were prepared for the occasion; and as the sun in France has not that antipathy to *fêtes champêtres* that our more prosaic luminary entertains, great pleasure was anticipated. But two days before that appointed for the *déjeúner*, Mr. Langham sprained his ankle; and when the morning arrived, the post-man delivered a letter, with a black seal, addressed to "the Hon. William Damer."

"How very provoking!" exclaimed Isabel; "William has just got a letter announcing the death of a cousin of his!"

"What cousin?" inquired Frances, looking from the "Journal des Débats."

"His cousin George, who was in the Guard" answered Isabel.

"Oh," said Frances, returning to her newspa "I never saw him."

"It's very disagreeable of him to die just now said Louisa.

"People always do die so very injudiciously, observed Frances, without raising her eyes fro the journal.

"Where is William?" asked Mrs. Langham.

"I believe he went to take a turn in the garde he seemed a good deal affected at the news," sa Isabel.

"They were brought up together," said Louis "Hadn't you better join him, Frances? I must and give Harry my arm; he can scarce hobble alo yet."

"I think it looks chilly," answered France glancing at the window. "Vaudré," she added, the groom of the chambers, "go and tell Mr. Dam we are waiting breakfast for him."

"It's very unlucky," said Isabel. "Georgi says she is too ill to go, and I'm sure mamma won' for she hates *fêtes champêtres*."

"And if the day does not get warmer, I'm sure I shall not go," said Frances.

"And I don't think Louisa will," said Isabel.

"Why not?" asked Frances.

"On account of Henry's foot," answered her sister.

"Nonsense!" said Frances; "her staying at home won't make his foot any better."

"So the end will be, that you and I shall have to go alone, Isabel," said Miss Dacres. "It is lucky you have me to chaperone you, I think."

"Go alone where?" inquired William Damer, who had just entered the room.

"To the *déjeûner*!" said Miss Dacres. "I am sorry to hear you cannot accompany us."

"No," replied Mr. Damer; "poor George's death has quite unfitted me for gaiety. We had not been much together lately; but as boys we were inseparable."

"Such losses always touch one nearly," observed Miss Dacres.

"Isn't the morning very cold, William?" inquired Frances.

"By no means," answered he. "There is a little mist that obscures the sun; but he'll break

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"Isn't the morning very cold, William?" inquired Frances.

"By no means," answered he. "There is a little mist that obscures the sun; but he'll break

[redacted] presently, and it will be a beautiful day. How's [redacted], Langham?"

"Better," said the latter, who had just entered the room leaning on his wife's arm. "I am sorry to hear you have bad news this morning! I'm afraid we shall muster very thin at the *déjeûner* to-day."

"There'll only be Lionel and me, and Isabel; unless you go, aunt!" said Frances.

"What you do mean to go?" said Louisa, with an expression of some surprise.

"To be sure I do!" answered Mrs. Damer.

"I thought your aunt said that she and Isabel were going alone," said William, affecting more

[redacted]

"Because I had rather not," answered she.

"I have a great mind to go rather than you should stay at home," said Harry. "I don't know that it would do me any harm. I need not walk about you know."

But his wife would not hear of it; and when he reiterated his regrets at her being deprived of the expected pleasure, she laughingly told him to hold his tongue, or she should think he wanted to get rid of her.

"He knows you won't go; that's why he presses you so!" said Isabel.

"Then it would only serve him right if I went on purpose to punish him," said Mrs. Langham.

This amiable devotion, however, did not prevent her entering into a fierce argument with her husband on the state of the suffrage; till Frances seeing the storm that was brewing, recommended that they should retire to dress.

"The mist's quite gone off, and we shall have a beautiful day! It's a pity you can't go, William."

William shook his head; whilst the three ladies left the room to dress, and Mrs. Langham to superintend their toilettes.

"It's lucky I brought you away," said Frances to her sister as they went up stairs. "You'd have

"No, you don't," answered Frances; apt to make other people lose their's eautiful bonnet this is! What a pit wear yours!" she exclaimed.

"I don't care the least about it," other. "I should have no pleasure in out Henry; and I wonder that you care William can't go with you."

"Oh, pooh!" said Frances. "What my staying at home do him?"

"Why, it would be a compliment, at It would be showing some deference t ings."

"It's a very bad practice to pay me ments," said Frances. "It spoils them, them *origeants*."

CHAPTER XVIII.

When the party returned from the *déjeûner*, they met Mr. Langham in the ante-room with his taper in his hand, going to bed. He nodded to them, and wished them good night.

"Is your foot worse, that you're going to bed so early?" asked Isabel.

"No; I am tired," answered Henry.

"So am I," said Lionel, yawning; "it was a devilish dull business."

"Well, I thought it so pleasant!" said Isabel, as Henry disappeared through the door.

When they reached the *salon* they had to impart all the details of the entertainment they had been at; to describe the decorations and the dresses; and tell who everybody flirted or danced with. Lionel

repeated that he thought the whole thing *manqué*; whereupon Frances whispered to Louisa, that that was because Madame de Grandmenil was not there; she had been prevented going by a violent *migraine*. Georgina said she was very glad she had remained at home. She had caught cold, as it was, by taking a turn on the terrace; she never put her head out but she caught cold now—she was sure the wind must be in the east. William Damer, however, assured her it was in the west, which she said was very odd! She could not think why she always caught cold!

Lady Grosvenor inquired with whom Isabel had danced.

one of the oldest families in England," rejoined Sir Francis."

"How would you like to be the Honourable Mrs. Aitchison, Bel?" asked Mr. Damer.

"I cannot tell," answered Isabel. "I am not sufficiently acquainted with him to judge."

"So like Bel!" said Frances, laughing.

"Quite right," said Louisa.

"Little Bel takes everything *au sérieux!*" said Lionel.

"I should think it very serious to be married to anybody I found I could not like," said Isabel, blushing when she had uttered the words, remembering how personal they were to her brother; but Lionel was not susceptible.

"I should think anybody might like Colonel Aitcheson," said Lady Grosvenor. I never met with a handsomer or more agreeable man."

"But Bel means to be desperately in love before she marries; don't you, Bel?" said Mr. Damer.

"I hope so!" answered she.

"Well, I recommend her to try and fall desperately in love with Colonel Aitchison as fast as she can," said Frances; "for I am very much mistaken if she has not made a conquest of him, and she's never likely to get a better offer."

"When the party broke up for the night, Frances said to Louisa:

"You and Henry have been having an argument again."

"We have had a little one," said Mrs. Langham.

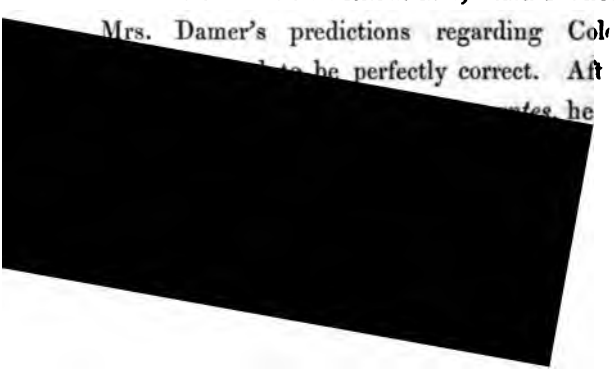
"A little one! Not a very little one, if I may judge by his countenance," responded Frances.

"He says Sir James Livingstone was a Knight of the Bath; but that's a mistake. I know the order he had was St. Michael and St. George."

"So you fought it out. Well, I confess I think you'd have been better engaged at the *déjeûner*."

"I can't agree with you," answered Mrs. Langham. "If I had gone to the Duc de Rivoli's without him, indeed, he might have had some cause for being out of temper."

"William is not out of temper, and yet I went to the Duc de Rivoli's without him," said Frances



Mrs. Damer's predictions regarding Col[redacted] to be perfectly correct. Aft[redacted] he

Colonel Aitchison was considered in every respect a most desirable alliance; fortune, family, and character were all unexceptionable. Isabel was considered exceedingly lucky, and was desired to hold herself prepared for a visit from her inamorato on the following day.

"I think he is too precipitate," she observed. "We are not sufficiently acquainted."

"*Cela viendra après!*" said Frances. "You'll have plenty of time to get acquainted, believe me!"

"But that acquaintance may not improve our liking; and, in the meantime, it is impossible to learn anything of a man's character by dancing with him."

"Colonel Aitchison's character has never been impeached," said Sir Francis.

"But I don't mean what you call his character, papa," said Isabel; "I mean his temper—his disposition—all those qualities which make a person agreeable or disagreeable to live with."

"All which, if you have any desire to ascertain, you must begin by marrying him!" said Frances. "An apprenticeship of seven years would not suffice to discover them before marriage!"

I can't think what you can see to
him," said Lady Grosvenor. "I suspect
not a young person at the ball last n
wouldn't have been glad to receive the at
paid you."

"I don't dislike him—I like him!" sa

"Then what more can you desire?"
gina. "What in the world do you
feel?"

"Depend upon it, Bel, nothing make
certainly miserable, as a violent pass
Frances. "Not one man in a thousand
object of one, without being spoilt: it d
their bad qualities—their extreme selfish
exigeance, their vanity. Never love a
much; or, if you're silly enough to do it
him know it."

"I wonder," thought William Damer

enough to know the meaning of the words; and she was not disposed to fling down her castles, and violate the principles she had set up for herself upon the first assault, however difficult self-defence might be in the present instance. Of all the men she had seen, Colonel Aitchison was, beyond a doubt, the most attractive to her. If she must, perforce, select a husband immediately, he was the one she would have chosen; but her sentiment went no further. She did not feel certain that he was the only man in the world she could love; nor had she the slightest apprehension that either he or she could break their hearts if they did not come together. This was not love in the way Isabel understood it; so she resolved to act upon her own responsibility, and be perfectly candid: it would be reason, both to herself and him, to give him less than her whole heart. She, however, communicated nothing of her intentions. Nobody would have appreciated her feelings but Louisa; and even she might have thought them a little extravagant, considering that she had not a shadow of any other attachment, and that she really did prefer Colonel Aitchison to any other man.

On the following morning, between twelve and one, Isabel was seated in Lady Grosvenor's boudoir,

when Colonel Aitchison was announced. It was enough to shake any woman's resolution to look at him! Such perfection of person and dress; such a noble aristocratic bearing! and when he opened his lips to speak, a voice and accent so musical and polished, that they might have sufficed to make nonsense agreeable, had he put them to the task, which, however, he did not. Colonel Aitchison never talked nonsense; he spoke very little; his manners and appearance were so satisfactory, that people were scarcely aware *how* little; but whenever he did say anything, it was appropriate and becoming. The secret of this was, that though he had very little intellect, he had a

the favourites of nature and the *élite* of society. He knew how welcome and desired those attentions were, and so far from ever meeting with a rebuff, he had always found "the smallest favour gratefully received." He was therefore not a little astonished, when he informed Isabel that he had Sir Francis's permission to lay himself and fortune at her feet, to see her hesitate and look more embarrassed than delighted. As soon as she could command her voice to speak, she thanked him sincerely for the honour he had done her, adding, with blushing cheeks: "But I think we ought to be better acquainted. The happiness of married life must depend so much on a thorough knowledge of each other's characters, and on an exclusive attachment which can only be founded on intimate acquaintance, that—"

"You decline?" subjoined Colonel Aitchison, with a grave bow, and turning very pale, as he saw her hesitate how to conclude her speech.

"Oh, no!" answered she, eagerly, for her resolution was wavering; "I only ask time for better acquaintance, and for that amount of attachment to be formed that ought to subsist between—"

"I have been too precipitate, I see," said he, rising. "Pardon me, Miss Grosvenor," and he

passed his hand over his face, as if to conceal h emotion. Isabel felt quite distressed, and wish she had taken another course. She expected h would have entered into her scruples, and ha consented to give her time, without feeling hu or disappointed; but it was evident he was ve much hurt. He seemed to take her answer mo as a rejection than she intended it.

"I only ask a little time—a very little time! she said. "I have notions that are perhaps some what romantic in regard to the attachment tha ought to subsist betwixt married people."

"You are quite right," he said, taking th hand she offered him. "It is I who have erred; bu I am very inexperienced in affairs of this sor and you must excuse my mistake. Do you happe to know if Mr. Grosvenor is at home? I hav a little business with him about a horse."

"I dare say Lionel will be in his own apar ments. This is about his breakfast hour. Don think," she said; but Colonel Aitchison did n give her time to go on; he clearly wished get out of the room. He was agitated, and thoug he tried to recover himself, his hand shook, an even his lips had lost their colour. As he clos the door, she burst into tears. She saw it all-

or thought she did. He was violently in love with her — devotedly attached; and the disappointment of her coldness and hesitation was too much for him. She was ready to call after him and bid him come back, that she might heal the wound she had made. Isabel could not resist the sight of a grieved lover; and all that was to be done by time and intimate acquaintance, was done already by the wan lips and trembling hand. She was ready to retract her conditions and accept him directly; but he was gone. However, she promised herself the pleasure of raising him from the depths of despondency to the summit of joy. She would not prolong his pain, but would restore him to happiness, by avowing his conquest without delay.

She had, however, no immediate opportunity of realizing her intentions. Nearly a week passed without a visit from Colonel Aitchison, and of course every hour he staid away rendered his presence more eagerly desired. His absence seemed to open Isabel's eyes to the state of her own heart. She grew desperately in love with him from day to day. Her cheek grew pale; her appetite failed; her sleep was disturbed. Then everybody blamed her. Sir Francis and her mother were quite angry;

they had never heard such nonsense in their liv
To reject such an offer!

"Mamma, I did not reject him. He could
take it as a rejection."

"I suspect he *has* taken it so; and who can
surprised? A man that may have any girl
chooses to ask! If you had disliked him, or h
any other attachment, one might have unde
stood it."

"I only asked for a little time," urged Isabel.

"A little nonsense!" said Sir Francis.

"You don't understand that sort of thing, Bel
said Mrs. Damer. "They don't want to be loved
that violent way by their wives; they'd find it
perfect bore."

"I don't know that," said her husband.

"I agree with Frances," said Lionel. "I should
wonder if Aitchison has taken fright. He did loo
rather terrified when he came to me that morni
to speak about my bay mare."

"He was disappointed, I dare say," said Louis
"but I think at least he must esteem Bel's m
tive."

"Why doesn't he prosecute his suit then?" s
Mrs. Damer. "They cannot get better acquaint
unless they meet."

"I dare say he will, after a little while," said Mrs. Langham. "Give him time."

"It will be rather a slow courtship, if so much time is needed on both sides," obse ved Lionel.

"I fancy Colonel Aitchison's the sort of man who would detest a *grande passion*," said Georgina, languidly. "I don't the least expect to see him here again."

"I hope you misjudge him," said Henry Langham. "I should think such conduct would be both unfeeling and ungentlemanly."

"I don't agree with you," said Louisa. "I think Bel's hesitation by no means unreasonable; but on the other hand, I don't see that Colonel Aitchison is bound to await a decision that must be uncertain."

"Well, I think, having once made the offer, that he is," said Henry.

"How long?" asked Louisa. "A month? a year? two years? ten years, for anything he knows."

"Oh no," said Isabel; "three months are all I should have asked."

"It's like taking a horse or a piano-forte on trial, to be returned if not approved," said Mrs. Langham.

Damer," "we shall have an argument c

"It is quite certain," said Mr. Dam
Colonel Aitchison is attached to Isabel,
be so easily repulsed; and if he is not,
without him."

Conversations of this description occu
daily, and were very painful to Isabel.
not the way she wished her love affairs t
at all—discussing them as if they were
business and calculation. She felt wo
pained by the publicity and the ridicule
properly understood and sympathized wi
Mr. Damer; but he always did. He
Isabel that devotion and faculty of lovin
his own wife was so singularly deficient
himself a severe sufferer from her want of
all things he desired to be loved; he hu
thirsted for affection, and yet by th
fatality which

"Bel's star is rising again," said Mrs. Damer one morning; "here are cards for a *soirée dansante* at Lady Longford's."

Lady Longford was Colonel Aitchison's mother.

"That looks well," said Louisa.

"I don't know that it signifies anything one way or the other," answered Mrs. Damer. "They could not leave us out, you know."

"At all events, Bel will have an opportunity of seeing what his intentions are."

Bel thought so too, and she looked forward to the evening with a beating heart. Colonel Aitchison's continued absence had alarmed her exceedingly. She was considerably relieved, however, by accidentally learning that he had gone to Fontainebleau to visit a friend there; so that after all no unfavourable conclusion need be drawn from his non-appearance. This comfortable intelligence was very opportune, as it enabled her to shake off the depression and embarrassment that might otherwise have shown her at a disadvantage. Still her heart beat almost audibly when she entered the *salon*, and saw him leaning against the wall, observing the dancers. He came forward immediately, was all smiles and graciousness, and seized the first opportunity of engaging Isabel for the next quadrille. It seemed evident that he had

been waiting for her. All was right, and
anxiety at an end. He danced with her seve
times, as often, indeed, as his duties towards
other guests admitted. Isabel found it the m
delightful party she had ever been at. It is tr
he made no allusion to their late conversation,
that only showed his tact and his delicacy, and h
well he understood her. He wished to leave h
quite free. How kind! how noble! how char
ingly heroic! She came home radiant with happ
ness, and promising herself she would not ke
him long in suspense. In short, had he had le
delicacy, and put the question now, she woul
certainly have waived her scruples about not bein
sufficiently attached. But how much more sh
admired him for acting as he was doing! He
enthusiastic young heart bounded with joy at th
prospect of happiness that awaited her. Neithe
was she further annoyed with the disagreeabl
comments of her friends. They were quite satis
fied with Colonel Aitchison's mode of taking Isabel'
bit of romance; perhaps, after all, he was a ma
that liked that sort of thing; it might have bee
better than accepting him too hastily, considerin
their short acquaintance; had she said yes at once
it would have appeared as if she had been husband
hunting, and was ready to take the first man th

asked her. In short, the result justified the deed; what had been wrong before was right now; and Isabel's marriage was henceforth familiarly discussed by the family party. The old people talked of the settlements, the ladies of the *trousseau*, and the gentlemen of hunting with Aitchison's hounds.

In order to promote the affair, and furnish opportunities for frequent meetings, Lady Grosvenor gave several dinners and entertainments, to which Colonel Aitchison was always invited. Happy days these were to Bel. It is true he never said anything about love or marriage, but he danced with her as frequently as propriety admitted; whenever he was not desired to take some one else, he generally led her in to dinner or supper; in short, he distinguished her by such a degree of attention as, after what had passed betwixt them, could scarcely have but one meaning. That he was not hasty in going further, who could blame him? he had erred by too much precipitance, and would doubtless be cautious the second time. Besides, Isabel thought that after what she had said regarding the necessity of an exclusive attachment, he must feel doubtful how far he had been able to inspire the requisite amount of affection. Oh! he need not have doubted! He had her whole heart now! He was all that her imagination had painted; all that her heart desired.

A few years older than her—indeed he was turned [illegible] but she liked him the better. His age gave him dignity and added respect to her love; yet he was young enough to retain all the graces of youth. She was herself scarcely twenty, and she would have thought a man of her own age a boy. Colonel [illegible] had certainly a fine person; dark hair and eyes and a fine *beard*. He danced gracefully, rode admirably: had a beautiful set of teeth and the most aristocratic hands that ever were seen. In short he was the fulfilment of Isabel's best dreams; and she was happy!

CHAPTER XIX.

As I mentioned in a former chapter, John Gibson had a powerful ally in the person of Sarah Peddie, who was an old servant and great favourite at the Adelphi, where she had things a good deal her own way. Sarah was over head and ears in love with John, and would have done anything in the world to please him; in short, she adored his ruddy cheeks and white teeth; and as she said herself, "made a perfect *hidoll* of him." She was older than John by about twelve years; rather fat, and considerably marked with the small-pox; but she was a good-natured creature, and had a great deal in her power, especially that which was of principal importance to the object of her affection; she could supply Agnes and Martha with work.

There was not only often house-linen to be ma
but also dresses for the servants in the house,
those who came to lodge in it; and not unfrequen
a gentleman would ask Sarah if she could reco
mend him somebody to make a set of shirts. Wh
it was discovered that Agnes was really a good dre
maker, Mrs. Mortlake, the mistress of the hou
began to employ her, and even to recommend her
her customers. So that John's recommendati
and Sarah's patronage were the foundation of
reasonable degree of humble prosperity. The sist
worked hard, but they wanted none of the comm
necessaries of life; and whilst little William Gib
grew and thrived apace, Agnes found in her mater
love, such rich sources of enjoyment, that she w
much happier than she had ever been before.

In the meanwhile, John Gibson, as is the c
with "hidolls" in general, was not grateful;
least not as Sarah Peddie would have had h
He was not responsive; he worshipped at anot
shrine. Sarah, however, suffered no jealous pa
for she never suspected Agnes of being her ri
believing John's attachment to the sisters to
merely a family one; she attributed her ill succ
to her age and want of attractions; and instead
having recourse to reproaches, she sought to vanqui
him by patience and kindness, exercised not on

towards himself, but towards those he loved. She recollected that the airs and caprices of youth and beauty would ill become her, and that if she won John's heart, it certainly would not be by the charms of her person. So far from bearing an enmity to Agnes and Martha, she entertained really a friendly feeling towards them, because they were John's friends, and because they were always ready to sing his praises, a theme most welcome to her ears; and out of kindness to them, as well as because she thought he was John's nephew, she lavished all manner of favours on the child. Often when Agnes and Martha were busy, and had not time to amuse him, they were not sorry to indulge Sarah with his company. Being housekeeper and barmaid, she was always bustling about, and little William liked nothing so well as hanging on to her apron, and what she called, helping her; which was, in fact, hindering her. Sometimes she carried him about in her arms, and when she was too busy to attend to him, she would set him on the floor to amuse himself with a toy. She told John she meant to leave the boy all her money; which, whilst it pleased him, was also a delicate way of informing him she had some to leave; and so she had, for she was prudent, and had saved what she described as *a pretty penny*.

"I shall be going there as I pa
answered John; "and if you like
cloth, and tell her to come."

"Tell her to come up about ten
afore he goes out."

No. 9 was at breakfast in the coff
Agnes arrived on the following morn
waited in his chamber till he had finis

"You're come about the collars?" s
entered the room; but as his eyes fel
his countenance changed, and he adc
confusion, "I beg your pardon!"

"Yes, Sir," answered Agnes. '
keeper said you wished to speak to me

"Oh, you—you make shirts, do you

"Yes, Sir."

Hereupon, No. 9, whose face had
red, cleared his throat, and hesitated a

wristbands, they did not expect to see a beautiful young woman, with an air and bearing far above her condition; and the effect upon them when they did see her, varied according to their characters. Some, uncertain of their ground, began to address her with a fulsome gallantry; others jumping at once to ill conclusions, showed a disposition to still more offensive proceedings; the few treated her with augmented consideration. Altogether, however, Agnes disliked these summonses exceedingly, and occasionally had recourse to sending her sister as her substitute; but although Martha was very capable of doing the plain work, she could not cut out or take an order; and to avoid mistakes Agnes was obliged to go herself.

"I—I want a dozen shirts made, Mrs.—Miss, I beg your pardon!"

"Mrs. Gibson, Sir."

"Gibson! eh; and I'm rather particular about the collars."

"How do you wish them made, Sir?" asked Agnes.

"I'll give you a pattern;" and as he spoke he lifted the lid of a portmanteau that stood on a chair; but appearing to be suddenly struck by some new idea, he let the lid fall again, and added, "Ill cut a pattern in paper, and send you;" and then

saying anything that did not relate t
she could hardly attribute his confusio
When the work was done she bade Jo
whether they were to be marked; and
being in the negative, Martha took hon
and the money was duly paid.

A few days after this event, Lione
received a letter from his cousin, Le
requesting the loan of a few hundrec
Lewis being *hard up*. When the writ
missed that subject, and some other mor
ones, he went on to say, that having b
in London, he had very unexpectedly co
certain lady, whom he little looked to
present situation. She is a sempstress;
at this moment the honour of wearing
structed by her fair hands. She calls h
Gibson; and according to the account I
at the hotel [illegible]

Lionel took the opportunity of announcing his approaching marriage with Lady Georgina Minevar; casually remarking, that *of course* he did not consider that foolish frolic at Ravenscliffe as any obstacle to his intentions, and that he was sure his cousin would see it as he did; more especially as the girl had thought proper to leave him, and had gone off with God knows who! and from what he, Lewis, had heard, had doubtless fallen into some low connexion.

"You are aware," he added, "that Minevar is dead, and that my intended *sposa* is one of the richest heiresses in England; and be assured, my dear cousin, that if in financial or any other matters I can ever be of use to you, you have only to say so."

This last sentence cost Lionel some pangs; not that he cared for the money that Lewis might suck out of him, but by this time he had grown to dislike his dear cousin. He not only felt that he was unpleasantly in that dear cousin's power; but he also thought that Lewis should have stood betwixt himself and his folly. The passion he had entertained for Agnes, for sentiment it cannot be called, had been long since extinct; and he was not only very angry with himself for marrying her, but he could scarcely conceive what had possessed him

into a politic resistance, which it wou
required a little perseverance on his
overcome. It occurred to him, too,
from throwing any impediment in the
foolish step, Lewis had rather encour
openly, but covertly; and whilst he di
part of adviser, and had actually ref
giving an opinion, he had somehow or
him forwards more effectually than any
have done. Lionel had not the abili
sisters; he was weak and without princi
was not a fool; and he saw with a dim
Lewis was not his sincere friend, though
from penetrating the depth of his cousi
plots which were altogether so complicat
the framer of them believed, far-seeing
were quite beyond the ken of Lionel's
derstanding.

Lewis Watson was emphatically

entering into any profession, or even seriously preparing himself for any. He had selected and rejected half a dozen; and his late appearance at college was not, in reality, with any view to study, but with the design of recommending himself to his rich cousin, whilst his mind was young and impressionable. He was far too idle, and too much occupied with his schemes and visions of future wealth, to work either mind or body; and he now considered that the obligation he had conferred on Lionel, by facilitating his marriage, or, rather, the power he had obtained over him, as the possessor of his secret, would suffice henceforth to replenish his purse, and exonerate him from the annoyance of any sort of labour. In short, the heir of Ravenscliffe must either maintain him himself, or by procuring him some easy and profitable situation, quarter him on somebody else. Lionel's illness, and some circumstances connected with it, defeated these hopes for several months: Lewis Watson retreated to the continent, and nothing was heard of him for a considerable period. At length he returned; and the letter above alluded to was the first intimation Lionel received of his cousin's whereabouts, as well as the first draft drawn upon his gratitude or his fears.

The receipt of the money was agreeable, and the

character, whom he considered now
body and soul. Lionel had, in fact,
Agnes, whom he disowned, and could
legitimate impediments to his, Lewis's
added to which, he knew he was in
health, and likely enough to die you
gave the table a triumphant blow w
when he read the letter, exclaiming, "I
do it!" triumphing both in the openi
and the successful scheming.

The meeting with Agnes, too, wa
opportune. He wished to keep his eye
to know where to find her when wanted.
he was fortune's favourite—everything
to his advantage.

On the whole, matters did not loo
tainly; and if not well enough to j
sanguine expectations, their aspect was
encouraging than that on which

CHAPTER XX.

Thus, easy and comfortable in his circumstances, Mr. Watson resolved to enjoy himself. He made another visit to the continent; and upwards of two years having slipped pleasantly away, he returned again to England: and partly from a desire to learn something of Agnes, without ostensibly making inquiries, he took up his quarters at his old lodging in the Adelphi, and communicated to Sarah that he wanted a set of shirts, and that, as the last were very well made, he would like to employ the same person again.

"That was Mrs. Gibson, Sir, I think."

"I think that *was* the name of the young woman."

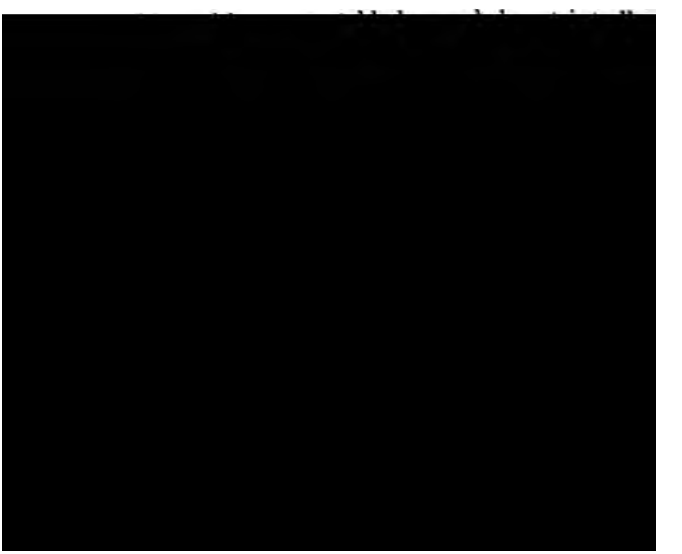
"Well, Sir, she don't make shirts now."

"Indeed! I'm sorry for that! Don't you think she would make mine? What is she doing?"

"She's got into a fashionable milliner's at the West-end, Sir. Perhaps you may recollect she was very handsome; and they wanted her for the show-room. They claps the bonnets and caps upon her head, and the folks that buys 'em, expects to look as handsome in 'em as she does."

"I understand. But isn't that a dangerous situation for so pretty a person as Mrs. Gibson? A widow, too, I think you told me?"

"Yes, Sir, she's a widdy, and sister-in-law to our John."



oracular sentence, she was interrupted by a noise outside the door, and the cry of a child.

"Lauk ha' mercy! there's that child tumbled over the slop-pail!" cried Sarah, darting out of the room, and catching up the boy, who was sprawling on the floor.

"Hush, hush, Billy arn't hurt," said she, patting the child on the back. "If Billy makes a noise, we shall have the missus up, and she'll send Billy home."

Billy was squalling with the whole power of his lungs, but this hint silenced him.

"There's a man; Billy wouldn't cry," said Sarah, wiping the child's eyes and nose with her apron, and re-entering the door of Mr. Watson's room. "I begs your pardon, Sir," she continued; "it's only little Billy Gibson, as can't abide to be away from me. He follows me about like a lamb a following of its mother. But about them shirts, Sir."

"Pretty dear! What did you say his name was?" said Mr. Watson, whose eyes were perusing the features of the child with a considerable degree of curiosity.

"It's Billy Gibson, Sir: Mrs. Gibson's little boy."

"You don't mean the Mrs. Gibson who made my shirts?"



never was a child: and this he
born till after she'd lost her husban
Lost him?

"Yes, Sir; I believe he fell from

"Then she's a widow?"

"In course, Sir; I thought I tol

"And his name was Gibson, the
porter here?"

"Yes, Sir; the same."

"The boy's not like his mother
semble his father?" inquired Mr. W

"I don't know, I'm sure, Sir; I
He died afore Mrs. Gibson came t
he's no ways like our John, his uncl

"A very fine child! How old is

"Just turned three, Sir. Shall I
for the shirts now, Sir?"

"I'll give it you to-morrow or nex

"Hall and the devil!"

highest spirits. Such a *contretemps* as this had never occurred to him.

"A child! a boy too! A brat that looks as if he was destined to live above a hundred, at least. D——n vaccination! I wonder if he's had the measles. I wish he'd broken his neck over the pail just now. What the devil's to be done? The resemblance and the age would settle the question at once. I wonder if his birth was registered. John Gibson! If I mistake not, that was the name of the man that signed the certificate; in which case, he must know who's the father as well as I do. What can have induced her to hold her tongue about the birth of the boy? Not money, for she's poor. They must have persuaded her the marriage was illegal."

And yet that seemed improbable, too. Concluding that Agnes had formed some second connexion, and never suspecting the existence of a child, Lewis Watson had fancied that he comprehended her conduct. He supposed she had relinquished her claims upon Lionel, because she had forfeited them. But, not to mention the rights of the boy and the natural desire a parent would feel to see them established, the great advantages to herself of being the acknowledged mother of the heir of Ravenscliffe were surely not likely to be flung away, if

she was blameless, without an effort to attain them? Why should she work for her bread, make shirts or stand on her feet all day in Madame de Ville's show-room? It was the most extraordinary abnegation ever heard of. Unless, indeed, she believed herself not really the wife of Lionel. But then again, how had she been persuaded to sit down quietly under such an injury? Why not make struggle for compensation? The thing was inexplicable.

All these reflections, and many more, chased each other through Mr. Watson's excited mind, within the first five minutes after Sarah left him, with Willy Gibson in her arms. Unacquainted as he was with the character of Agnes, her conduct was inexplicable. It was impossible for him to conceive the respect and awe which circumstances had engendered in her mind towards the Ravenscliffe family on the one hand, and her own pride and delicacy on the other; the two combined, making her shrink from enforcing claims which she knew they would think monstrous and ridiculous, and which even appeared so to herself; and so far from seeking redress for the injury she had received, she recoiled with horror and dread from the ridicule and scorn that she knew would be lavished on her were she to allege it. If she asked nothing of them, at least

they could not trample on her; if she claimed nothing, they could not revile her.

Willie, as his mother called him, and Billy, according to Sarah Peddie, had grown in the affections of the housekeeper till she was never happy without him, nor he without her; and now that Agnes was generally all day from home, the child spent nearly his whole time with his patroness, who publicly declared her intention of making him her heir. Not that she had conquered her passion for John, nor quite relinquished the hope of calling herself Mrs. Gibson, but she was quite aware that she could in no more effectual way recommend herself to his regards than by such an avowal. Sarah was, perhaps, not exactly the tutoress that Agnes might have selected for her son had she been free to choose, but she didn't know how else to dispose of him so well. She proposed, when he grew a little older, sending him to school—infant schools were then unknown—but he was too young for that at present, and in the meantime he was well fed, well taken care of, and perfectly happy under Sarah's protecting wing. He was thus always about the house or the door; running with John when he was sent on messages, or hanging on Sarah's apron as she went about her business; and thus he daily fell

under the observation of Mr. Lewis Watson, wh
thought it inconceivable that he did not get ru
over or tumble down the area steps and brea
his neck. For several days after he first lear
the child's parentage, he fancied something of t
sort must inevitably happen; and he never can
home after being absent any time without e
pecting to see Sarah in tears, and to be told t
boy had met with an accident; for as I ha
observed, he was of a sanguine disposition, a
was pervaded by a strong conviction that t
wished-for fortune was destined to be his.
numerous, it struck him, were the dangers ly
in the path of infancy, that he only wonde
how any child, however watched and tend
should grow to manhood; and that this ch
should do so, who played half the day in
London street, seemed highly improbable.
read all the accidents in the newspapers with
culiar pleasure, and counted with interest the
fantine deaths recorded in the obituary. He e
took the trouble of procuring some statistical
culations on the subject; and having ascertai
the number of children that die in London,
felt a strong persuasion that little Willie Gib
was not destined to arrive at manhood.

This persuasion, however, which at times alm

amounted to a conviction, did not bring him repose; he was too impatient for the *dénouement* of the drama to wait contentedly for the catastrophe; he felt that he should like, in some way or other, to expedite it. He was conscious, in short, of an extreme desire to kick the child from the top of the stairs to the bottom; and one day, when on passing an open door, he saw him leaning half out of a window, he would certainly have helped him a little further, had not reading and education instructed him that such indulgences are perilous to the contriver.

But when the state of alternate hope and disappointment had continued through a considerable part of the London season, Mr. Watson's patience began to be exhausted, and it occurred to him that if fortune would not help him, he must needs help himself; but how? He was not a man for violent measures; he wished to get the child out of the way, but not to harm him, for that would be harming himself. After much reflection, a scheme struck him that he thought might answer; and as it was in consonance with his character, a *deep* one, he immediately set about laying the train for its execution.

CHAPTER XXI.

"WHAT'S the matter there below?" inquired Mr. Watson one evening of the waiter, who had followed him up stairs to take his orders. "What are those women making such a noise about in the passage?"

"It's about the child, Sir, that you may have seen running about the house. They don't know what's become of him."

"What, has any accident happened to him?"

"They're afraid so, Sir; or he's strayed away or something. He was out playing afore the door in the afternoon, and whether anybody's caught him up, or whether he's strayed away of his self nobody knows."

"Why should you think anybody'd catch him

up? What motive should anybody have for doing such a thing?"

"One of them child-stealers, Sir, might do it; sometimes they takes children and strips 'em for their clothes."

"But in that case they'll let him go again."

"I can't say, Sir; sometimes they keeps 'em to beg."

After some further conversation and inquiries as to what measures had been adopted for the boy's recovery, the man was dismissed, and Mr. Lewis Watson undressed himself and stepped into bed. What sort of night he passed I will not pause to inquire, but rather proceed to the weeping women below.

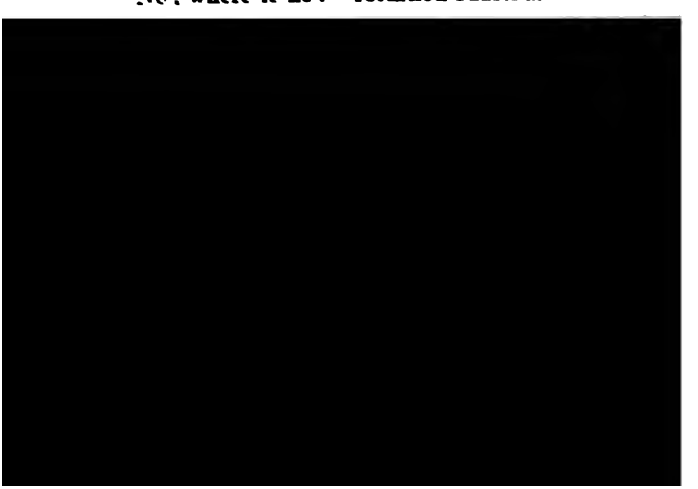
Dress-making, of however humble a description, being more profitable than shirt-making, Martha, under her sister's tuition, had taken to that line, continuing to work in their lodging for the sake of having a home for the child and a resting-place for Agnes, when she was released on Saturday nights. On other nights she slept at Madame de Ville's, in order that she might not be subject to the annoyance of passing at a late hour through the streets. Sunday was her gala day, for that she passed with her boy; the rest of the time he was under the charge of Martha; and when,

as happened four or five days in the week, he had been carried off by John or Sarah in the morning, she was in the habit of fetching him back at bed-time, if not duly returned before.

On the evening in question, she had been very busy, having a dress to finish which was imperatively demanded by an impatient maid of all work for the approaching Sunday, and had somewhat delayed fetching the boy, hoping to see him arrive under the escort of one of his friends. At length, as he came not, between eight and nine, she threw on her bonnet, and proceeded to the Adelphi. John was busy carrying up the trunks of some travellers just arrived.

"Ha'n't you got Billy home yet?" said he.

"No; where is he?" returned Martha.



warrant," said Sarah. "He's o'er fond of going there when he can run away."

Sarah's hypothesis, however, proved to be unfounded. Willie Gibson was not there, nor could he be found in any part of the house.

For some time it was suspected that being later than usual he had got tired, and had fallen asleep in some corner or another, and every room was searched, and every bed and sofa examined, but to no purpose, the child was not to be found.

Then followed the inquiries as to who had last seen him and where; and it appeared that in the course of the evening, John, when starting on an errand to Pall Mall, had found him playing with a girl of his own age in the street. The girl had some toys, particularly a little tin carriage painted red and blue, with which they both seemed highly delighted, insomuch that Willie was at first unwilling to leave it, even to accompany his much-loved John; but John having recourse to the well-known expedient of applying his red cotton pocket-handkerchief to his eyes and pretending to cry, the child relented and went. When they returned, he met one of the lodgers at the door, who desired him to run off immediately and engage him two places in the York mail, and then to proceed as far as Oxford Street with a note. He

had never seen him. Neither
appear to have done so. Two
servants agreed that they had ob
with the little girl and the tin ca
it appeared he had been seen pl
none could be positive at what h
remarked him; and the gentlem
standing at the door when the c
had already departed. The pro
Willie Gibson had gone off with
it became important to discover
where she lived, but this did
matter. She belonged to none o
several people had seen her, but no
she came. The man who swept th
might have been able to give s
but he was gone before the ch
discovered, and the affair, as well

Agnes slept well that night after her day's labour —the labour of standing on her feet and talking to one woman after another about her cap or her bonnet; listening to their various requirements and complaints, sympathising with their doubts and uiding their discussions anent flowers and feathers, nd ribbons and gauze—no anxious dreams visited er pillow that Friday night; but as she lay down, he thanked Heaven that the next day would be aturday, and that she could go home to her boy— at little star that alone cheered her existence. gnes was now a very different person to the Agnes the Holmes Farm; experience and trouble had ellowed her character, and since her heart was ened and her affections roused by becoming a ther, her pride was modified and her selfishness quered. If she submitted cheerfully to a life fatigue and to an irksome employment, it was for herself that she did it, but in order that might earn the means of giving her boy a pectable education; and if she was still proud, was a pride that recoiled from insult and from all it was repugnant to her innate delicacy as a man. Whatever germs of ambition or love of andeur had been mingled with it formerly, were w wholly eradicated. She saw the absurdity of shing to be lifted by external accidents out of

[illegible] that would have embitter[illegible]
[illegible] know how little toleration they hav[illegible]
encroach upon their outworks. Sh[illegible]
was, perfectly, the immature and supe[illegible]
that had led Lionel to deceive h[illegible]
himself, and whilst she despised an[illegible]
she thought the deliberate deceptio[illegible]
used on her, she was almost ready [illegible]
in consideration of the splendid r[illegible]
escaped.

But during that night, whilst Ag[illegible]
happy ignorance, John and Martha[illegible]
the streets in search of their stray[illegible]
Sarah, whose office did not permit of[illegible]
house, stood weeping and wringing h[illegible]
door of the hotel. When the morn[illegible]
tidings, the sad necessity impended

reserve it till she came home at night, expecting to find her darling safe in bed; and the third protested against being in haste.

"Ill news travels fast enough of itself," said Sarah, "without our helping it. What need be in such a hurry? Who knows but we may find him again before night!"

But Martha, who always felt a certain awe of her sister, feared the responsibility of delaying the communication. She might think they had not done all that could be done, and that had she herself been earlier informed, she might have found her boy; so she overruled their objections, and set off with a heavy heart for Bruton Street. When she arrived, there was a carriage at the door, and fearful of intruding, she lingered at the corner till she saw Madame de Ville's door open, and the owners of it depart. Then she crossed the street, and rang at the bell.

"I want to speak a word with my sister, Mrs. Gibson, if you please."

"Very well; you had better sit down."

There was a bench in the passage for footmen on wet days, whereon Martha seated herself. Presently there was a loud rat-tat at the door; the young lady, dressed in the height of the fashion, who had admitted her, opened it; several ladies entered, and



Martha, who was sitting c
found courage to obtrude h
notice of the elegantly-dress
she ventured to ask if she thc
soon be down, and the your
she had not yet been able
show-room was full of ladies.

Another hour elapsed, wit
for there still flowed on an i
ladies, so that Martha began
better spend her time in seeki
sitting there; and rememberi
a place that would be to comm
of intelligence, she came away.

Little dreaming of the ill n
Agnes was in the meanwhile
duties of setting off coiffures
handsome face and figure, wl

stopped to make her purchases. It being scarcely nine o'clock, the shop was still lighted, and the pavement crowded with busy pedestrians, when after inspecting the various dogs and rabbits and jumping-joans in the window, she was attracted by a little carriage, painted very showily in red and blue. It would probably cost more money than she was accustomed to give, but as it looked very attractive, she stepped in and inquired the price.

"It's eighteen-pence," said Mrs. Bint, the shop-keeper, who was acquainted both with Agnes and her child from her frequenting the shop; "but you mustn't buy him that: a lady brought him here to-day, and gave him one exactly like it."

"A lady! what lady?" asked Agnes.

"I couldn't say who she was. She'd a little girl with her, and she had just such another toy in her hand, which she had bought in the morning. I fancy your boy had been crying for it, or something, so she brought him here and gave him one to his self."

Agnes supposed the lady might be some good-natured lodger at the hotel, so she altered her intentions, and selected a leaping frog, with which she proceeded to her lodgings. Being earlier than usual, she ran up stairs as soon as the maid opened the door, hoping the child might be yet awake, but

the door of her room was locked. Martha must be out—probably gone to fetch him; so she turned to descend again, when the girl, who had followed her, asked her if she had "heard anything of him yet?"

"Heard anything of who?" asked Agnes.

"Of the child," answered the maid. "Lauk! don't you know they've a-lost him? Your sister's been in and out all day a-seeking of him, and asking if he were comed home. She said she was going to the Adelphi, and would be back afore you came."

"Oh, my God! my God!" cried the mother, clasping her hands with passionate anguish, as she flew down the stairs again, and along the street, in pursuit of Martha, whom she presently met hastening home, with the intention of being there first. Then came the eager inquiries, the painful discouraging answers, the despairing ejaculations: "Oh, my boy! my boy! what shall I do without my boy!"

Neither Martha nor John Gibson had been able to obtain any intelligence. Agnes herself had heard more than anybody else, as it happened, from the toy-shop woman; and thither they now went to make further perquisitions, and to learn what sort of lady it was that had bought the toy.

"*Was* it a *lady?*"

[rs. Bint said "No;" she didn't think she was, ıgh she'd very good black clothes on. She :e kindly to the child, and led him by the hand. had never seen her before but once, and that the same morning, when she had come in with little girl, and bought her the tin carriage. little girl was extremely pretty, and in the ıing neatly dressed in a cotton frock and coarse r bonnet, tied down with a green ribbon; but ı they returned with the boy, she looked dirty smutty, as if she had been playing in the street. suggested, that the stranger might have taken ɔoy home with her, and would bring him back, she promised to be on the look-out should she the window.

his was all they could get there. John had ı to the police-offices; and in short, he and tha had been everywhere they could think of, the latter recommended Agnes to go home and ; but that was impossible. Who can sit still n one's heart and brain are impatiently ranging earth in search of one's lost treasure? She ; Martha with her, and they set off, rushing ɔugh every street in the neighbourhood, entering y open door, and questioning everybody of m question was possible. Some shook their ds, and said that there were so many children

sad stories of accidents and child-st
others again, who liked gossip, and
long the pleasure of the excitement,
had seen just such a child as she de
a man, or a woman, or crying at t
street; but she obtained no intel
whole weary night they tramped the
Sunday morning they were so much
they were perforce obliged to rest,
down, for rest there was none for t
few hours passed in tears of anguis
of despair, Agnes rose and went for
Martha, whose sufferings were not n
those of her sister; but it was all
Monday handbills were posted, offe
for any information, Sarah Peddie de
willing to give all the money she ha
for the recovery of "poor little E
John Gibson, he was in despair

fortune might not have occurred. Betwixt the sufferings of his mind, and the fatigues of his body, for he was scouring the town night and day, and took no sleep, a week reduced him to the shadow of his former self, and the ruddy cheeks that had won Sarah's heart, were as wan and hollow as those of the under-waiter at the end of a sharp season.

CHAPTER XXII.

On Monday morning, Martha went to Bruton Street to make an excuse for her sister's non-

reporting that she had found her ill in bed, the illustrious lady condescended to call herself. At the sight of her Agnes burst into a fresh passion of tears, whereupon Madame de Ville recommended her not to spoil her beauty by crying, adding that she had herself lost fourteen children; yet there she was *toute fraîche*, she hoped. In short, she was of opinion that the loss of children was often rather a blessing than otherwise; for who could say how they might turn out, or what trouble they might occasion us when they grew up? whereas, the possession of beauty was a positive good, and the preservation of it an imperative duty. As a good deal of her homily however was delivered in French, Agnes understood it very imperfectly; but she took care to make her comprehend clearly that she expected her to return with as little delay as possible to her post in Bruton Street. Agnes answered, that when she had found her boy she should see her.

"*Mais avant s'il vous plait, Madame!*" said Madame de Ville, with such a ferocious aspect that Martha felt quite frightened, and inquired what she had said. But Agnes was too much occupied with her own thoughts to trouble herself about Madame de Ville or her affairs.

many things. The police will give trouble for me; but if they knew w was, they might find him! I'll go to Perhaps he could assist me!" But ho of doing this, she was for some days her bed from extreme weakness, cons own exertion. The moment she felt s upon her feet, she rose in spite of treaties, and having called a coach Saville Row. As she had been for customed to go there regularly to recei paid for the child, she was always adr question. Three months, however, since she had called, and on seeing h yers supposed she had repented of l which had been for the purpose of tel being now able to support her boy h longer needed the allowance. Struck

nodding his head significantly. "I think you're right."

"It's not for the money I've come, Sir," she sobbed out. "I've lost my child."

"Indeed. What did he die of?"

"He's not dead; at least, I hope not!" she answered, bitterly weeping; and then she related what had occurred. Whilst she spoke, the face of Mr. Conyers expressed considerable surprise and curiosity, and he asked her several questions; but when he had elicited all he could, and she requested his advice how to proceed, he professed himself unable to give her any.

"You have been to the police offices, you say, and put up handbills. I don't know anything else you can do."

Agnes thought there was something very peculiar in his manner, and she came away possessed with a new idea; namely, Mr. Conyers had some reason for suspecting Lionel of abstracting the child. Why Lionel should do it, she could not conceive. He could have no affection for the boy, nor any reason that she could imagine for bearing him ill-will. The paltry stipend could not be a consideration; besides, wherever he was he must cost something; but still his disappearance seemed very like the result of a plot, and who but



difference, and longed to possess h
else had seen him, and represen
gaging child he was! These were
but they seemed to her consistent
She had heard indeed that Mr. G
the family were still in Paris, ar
tended spending the ensuing wi
Lionel might have been in Engl
time, and taken the boy away w
how should she ascertain the fact
one way, which was to go to Pa
see Lionel. It was a very painful t
there could be no pain like that she
ing. When she communicated he
her sister, Martha adopted them at
she seldom held any opinion opp
Agnes, whom she looked upon as mu
of judging on all matters than hersel
they were household matters, there

y pay her, on condition she returned to
ion; a thing she shrunk from under
:umstances. She had been engaged for
, and there were yet several weeks of
ıexpired.
:re yet discussing this question when
the voice of the owner of the house
n from below. Martha rose, and opened

somebody wants Mrs. Gibson," said the

lew down stairs, and Agnes after her; it
some one bringing news of the child.
d in the passage.
s it?" they cried with one voice.
summons," answered the man. "Is
Gibson?"
nswered Martha. "This is Mrs. Gibson."
she must come along with me to the
:," said he, "unless she prefers going
s. de Will's. If you like to go back and
ıenses of this here summons, she'll take
, you must go along with me."
ıer of the house stood near them, ob-
ıt passed.
must I do?" inquired Agnes, turning
n.

[illegible] and [illegible]
[illegible] to [illegible] and [illegible]
[illegible] to [illegible] and [illegible]
but keep her promise: so she ra
and shawl, and set off.

As they marched along, he a
disliked returning, and whether i
'mistress treated her ill.' Then
her misfortune, together with all
had been able to collect.

"It is so extraordinary," she sa
find out who the little girl belong
been playing with, although severa
her, not only that day, but for a
She belonged to nobody in the n
I and my friends have been to e
about the spot."

"Some lodger, as decamped, I
officer, whose name was Ramsay

my child was taken away: a person that lives close by where they were playing, happened to be looking out of the window, when a coach drove up to the hotel door, and she saw a woman, or a lady—she couldn't quite say whether she was a lady, but she was very well dressed—rush forward, and lift the child on to the pavement; and she appeared to be warning her to keep out of the way of carriages; but whether this person belonged to her, or was only a chance passenger, that saw the child in danger, we can't find out. The sweeper of the crossing says that there was a lady in black that walked about a good deal for two or three days, and seemed to be looking at the river; but he never observed her speak to the child.

"She was a decoy, I take it."

"Who was!"

"The little girl. They wanted your boy for 'om'ut, and she was sent out to decoy him away."

"But she was too young to comprehend such a plot."

"Maybe; but he'd get used to play with her, and then he'd go away with them to the toy-shop."

Parsons seemed to think, however, that the child would be recovered; and he promised to be on the look-out himself, and to speak to his brother officials on the subject. As they were passing up the Hay-

market, a man came out of an eating-house on t
left-hand side, and stood upon the step, whilst
drew on a pair of ragged gloves. As Agnes's e
met his, she recognised his person; it was Leigh
Mr. Grosvenor's former valet, but sadly chang
his features were haggard, his figure wasted, a
his clothes shabby. He knew her too, and a
vanced, saying:

"How do you do, Miss Crawfurd?"

She would rather not have acknowledged hi
but did not know how to avoid it. She did n
stop, however, but walked on, whilst he fell in besi
her.

"Are you living in London, still?" he said.

"Yes," she answered; "I and my sister live to
gether."

"And is Mr. Grosvenor in London?"

"I don't know, indeed," she answered, blush
ing. "I heard that he went abroad to recover hi
health."

"That was a bad business for me, Miss Craw
furd," said Leighton, with a sigh. "God's m
witness I was as innocent of the whole thing as th
child unborn. I saved master's life, for if I hadn'
gone down stairs he'd have bled to death mos
likely; and in return I'm a ruined man. Who'
ever take me into their service again?"

"It is certainly very hard," answered Agnes.

"You never had any idea," he said, "who it was you saw in the park that night?"

"Never!" replied Agnes; "but it was a taller, stouter man than you, and I am pretty sure that he passed me on the road near the mile-stone whilst I was waiting for the coach."

"If I could find him, I'd take his life!" said Leighton, clenching his fist.

"Hallo!" said Parsons; an exclamation which first drew Leighton's attention to Agnes's companion, whom he now eyed with considerable curiosity.

"If you'd as good reason, as I have, perhaps you'd say as much," said Leighton. "I'm thinking of going to Mr. Grosvenor, wherever he is, to ask him how I'm to get my bread honestly without a character."

Agnes did not know what to say, and heartily wished she had not met him. His case was undoubtedly according to her own persuasion a very hard one, but she was too much engrossed with her own sorrows to have much sympathy to bestow upon his; so when they reached the crossing, she wished him "good morning" in a manner that left him no alternative but to depart.

"Good morning!" he said, in a desponding tone.

Mr.
his
his
van
bu
st
p

"I'm afraid I'm interrupting you!" said Agnes, turning away her head to hide her tearful face. "I'm not going to stay."

"Oh! no! I must go back to the work-room," said Miss Barber "But when do you go, Jane?"

"To-morrow, or next day at farthest," answered the woman.

"Of course the sooner the child has a change the better, but a couple of days wouldn't make much difference, and I wish you would stay over Sunday."

"I can't" said the stranger; "but I shall be back before winter."

"And how much longer do you think David and the Major 'll be away?"

"Lord knows! It depends upon these slaves that are making a rumpus. But I must be going, for I've left the children locked up, and I'm always afeard they'll get into mischief."

"Oh! stop a moment," said Miss Barber. "I want to send Helen a piece of silk for her doll. I'll fetch it in a moment."

"It's very warm weather!" observed the stranger to Agnes, when Miss Barber quitted the room.

"Very!" answered Agnes, who felt that the observation was probably prompted by the colour of her own face, which was flushed with weeping and keeping pace with the officer; so she waited,

wishing to put herself into a little better trim before she appeared up stairs.

"London gets disagreeable at this season, though the fashionable folks don't seem to think so," continued the stranger; "and yet for heat, it's nothing to the place I was at abroad; but somehow, I think I feel it more than I did there, but I'm going down to the sea at Brighton, and I hope it will be cooler down there."

Miss Barber now re-entered the room with some scraps of silk and gauze for the doll; and after a few words of farewell, the stranger took her leave, wishing Agnes good morning as she passed. When Miss Barber had let her out, she returned, saying that the woman was her sister, and that she had made a very bad marriage, poor soul!

"I don't mean that her husband treats her ill," she said, as she smoothed her hair and pulled out her curls before the glass, "but he's a soldier, and she's had a miserable time of it ever since she married him. But I hope you have found your little boy!"

"No!" answered Agnes, sadly shaking her head, whilst the tears she had been trying to stem, began again to course each other down her cheeks. "I am afraid I shall never find him!"

"I've often heard of children being lost and

found amongst the chimney-sweepers!" rejoined Miss Barber. "They steal them to sweep the chimneys. My sister once lost a child, and she was in a dreadful fright for fear the sweeps had taken him, but he had just strayed away by himself."

"Then she did find him again?" said Agnes, eagerly, grasping at the precedent.

"Yes, she did; but he was away a day and a night. The watchman had found him crying on a door-step, and took care of him; but he died afterwards, poor little fellow."

"From being out all night?"

"Oh, no; it was in fine summer weather. But the regiment David (that's my brother-in-law) belongs to, was ordered abroad, to Jamaica, and the climate was too hot, I fancy; for, though he was as fine a child as you ever saw, he sickened and died very soon after they got there. They thought it would have broke my sister's heart; but, luckily, a little girl came to make up the loss; and she's the only one she has now. I'm very glad of it, for dragging a family about after a regiment, is a horrid thing."

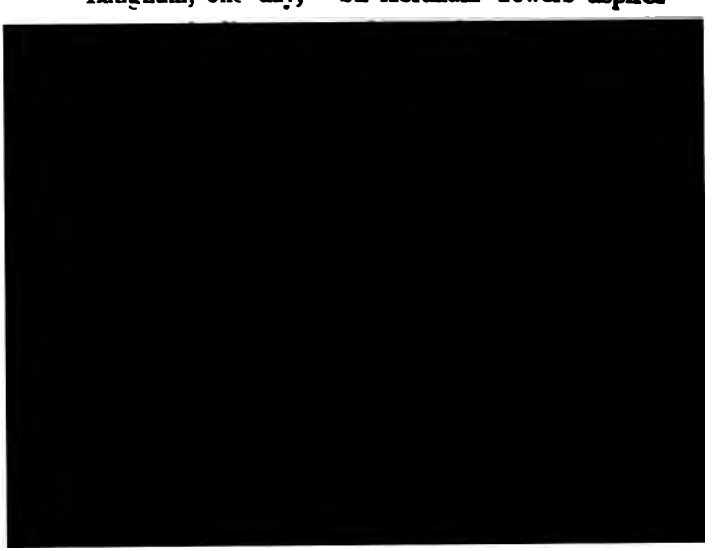
A young head was now put in, to inquire why Mrs. Gibson did not make her appearance up stairs; whereupon, Agnes wiped her eyes once more, and

swallowing her tears as well as she could, as
to the show-room, and resumed her former fu
But her pale cheeks, and swollen eyelids, no
set off the *coiffures*, adding a grace to the
ones, or making the ugly ones becoming
when she should have been soothing the va
Madame de Ville's customers, and enticir
money out of their pockets, her eyes were s
to the window, watching every child that
along the street; and her absent thought
wandering after her boy. Now, in imaginati
saw his little body cast upon the strand—l
fallen into the river, and been drowned; s
upon the earth, laid it in her bosom, weepin
and kissing those wan little features; then s
him dragged along the streets by some wi
beggar, clothed in rags, his back marked by
and his face disfigured by tears and dirt;
again, she sat upon his grave—he was found
to death—found just too late; an hour
sooner, and he might have lived! Then he
would stir with a sudden hope—Lionel had
him! It was no beggar, but a well-
person, that had been seen with him. What
any well-dressed person want with her child?
could *anybody*, who was not a beggar, wa

him, except Lionel? She would go to Paris, and see Mr. Grosvenor; the money Madame de Ville owed her, would pay the journey: and she eagerly reckoned the weeks that must intervene before she should be free.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"If I am not much mistaken, Bel," said Mrs. Langham, one day, "Sir Abraham Towers aspires



though latterly, not so often as he had done at first. He sometimes called, sometimes rode with them to the Bois de Boulogne; and, in short, maintained a regular and friendly intercourse, in which Isabel was generally more or less distinguished by his attentions. But were they the attentions of a lover? It was impossible to say.

His conduct might certainly be the result of an excess of delicacy; and as this was the most comforting conclusion she could come to, it was that into which she generally subsided after these anxious self-examinations; but still there was a constant under-current of anxiety, damping her spirits, and quenching her natural gaiety; added to which, she had no small degree of annoyance and vexation to encounter from her mother. Her sisters, who felt the delicacy of her situation, and were more or less capable of comprehending her feelings, seldom said anything to give her pain; but Lady Grosvenor, who was disappointed at her risking the loss of so desirable an establishment, gave way to her natural peevishness on the subject; and Lady Georgina, who looked upon Bel's romantic notions with contempt, found innumerable opportunities of making ill-natured and sarcastic observations, which often brought the tears into the poor girl's eyes, and forced her to a rapid retreat to hide them.

unmarried female amongst them; s
object, if he had any at all.

Lady Grosvenor, who had conside
about Colonel Aitchison, made the B
come, and begged Sir Francis to do
it will be indispensable," said she, '
chison hangs back much longer, tha
appear slighted. It must be thou
rejected him, for everybody remarke
and this can only be obtained by l
ance of somebody else; and Sir
be an excellent match, in point
least."

Affairs were still in this position
May, when somebody proposed mal
to Chantilly, and taking a large ch
happened to be vacant: not mer

exclude the disagreeable and the elderly. Amongst the acceptable were the Langhams and Damers, and their young sister. Sir Abraham Towers had a horse to run, so he was to be one of course; and Colonel Aitchison was never omitted from anything that was fashionable and *recherché*.

"Now we shall have an opportunity of seeing how your swain conducts himself," said Louisa; "and if he does not make some very decided manifestations now, I recommend you to make a clever retreat. If you don't, you'll be the laughing-stock of Paris; for depend on it, if you let the world suspect that you are *délaissée*, it will not spare you."

Isabel said she did not care a bit for the world; but she prepared with a beating heart for the excursion to Chantilly, for she thought, too, that this fortnight would decide her fate. She had not seen Colonel Aitchison for three weeks, he having been to England, as his mother hinted, on a business of importance; and he consequently did not join the party till the day after everybody else. As he was an object of much speculation, and as the ladies who had designs on him, more or less developed, were extremely desirous of knowing the real state of affairs betwixt him and Isabel, she was pretty closely observed, and all her little agitations

and self-possessed in her happines
lived in an eternal alternation of hop
rendered it impossible to conceal
whilst Colonel Aitchison, by the c
formity of his manner towards
always at a disadvantage.

When nearly a week had elaps
which had been very fine, sudden
becoming wet and cold, constrained
back on indoor amusements. Th
their music and their embroidery fr
gentlemen flirted or played at cards
when they were all assembled in
ladies at one end of a large saloo
tlemen at the other, sitting round
servant entered the room with a n

"What is it?" asked Frances.

"Oh, nothing," answered Louisa, who had at first turned red, but was now very pale, whilst at the same time she pretended to be reading her letter with perfect unconcern.

"Dear me!" said the Honourable Mrs. Waterhouse; "the Prince de Villafranca's dead. What a pity! I'm so sorry!"

"Was he a friend of yours?"

"Oh dear no! but you know he's Madame de Casanova's father; and as she was very much attached to him, she'll be out of society for a year, I'm afraid.

"The Dartmores are coming to Paris immediately," said Mrs. Damer; "and they want us to take a house for them for three years."

"Oh dear!" said Lady Longford, eagerly; "I wish ours might suit them."

"Do you want to give it up?" asked Frances.

"Yes, I do," answered Lady Longford; "and you'll propose it to them, I should feel particularly obliged."

Of course, at hearing this Bel's heart began to beat twenty to the dozen. It appeared to her that Lady Longford could make no move which would not affect her happiness one way or the

so much."

"So we do, but business w
go to England, and I want to
my hands."

Isabel bowed her head over l
felt her cheeks were flushing.
been glad to slip out of the ro
not courage to rise from her chair

"To England!" exclaimed hal
"What a pity! How we shall
what in the world are we to dc
Aitchison?"

"But I'm not going to take n
me," exclaimed Lady Longford, s

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. W
you venture to leave him here alo

"Madame de Préville's youngest son, Auguste, has got an attachéship," said Mrs. Langham, making a desperate effort at a diversion. "What a fine boy he is."

"Very," said Mrs. Waterhouse, who had never seen him, and did not know whether he was or not; but she wanted to dismiss the subject and recur to the previous one, having a little *tendresse* for the Colonel herself. "But where is Colonel Aitchison to live if you go away?" she asked.

"He'll find somebody to give him a home, I dare say," said Lady Longford.

Isabel's ears grew hot; she heard something beating in her head like a drum at a distance; and although she bent over her frame, she could not see where to put in her needle.

"Now, Lady Longford, this is abominable!" said Mrs. Waterhouse. "There's a secret, and we *must* have it."

"Lady Longford has certainly a very mysterious air," said Lady Craven.

"There are the gentlemen breaking up their game," said Mrs. Waterhouse. "I shall go and ask Colonel Aitchison himself for an explanation."

"Well, I believe it is no use making a secret of it any longer, for I hear they've got it in the "Morning Post" already."

who, as well as Louisa, was in a
sister, but did not dare speak t
look towards where she sat.

"I think I can guess," sai
glancing towards Isabel, of wh
remained visible but the forel
crimson.

Lady Longford's eye followed
speaker, and the poor girl's att
reveal to her something she did
remind her of something she had f

"Say no more, I request," sl
"I'll tell you all about it another t
the gentlemen."

"That's what took you to E
dog," said young Harry Vane, p
at Colonel Aitchison, who was h

Colonel Aitchison is going to be married! See there, he slinks away, blushing and hiding his face," he added, as Colonel Aitchison turned toward the door.

"*De l'histoire ancienne!* we know it already," cried Mrs. Waterhouse. "But who's to be the bride? that is the question," she added, attempting to snatch the newspaper out of Harry Vane's hand, assuming more gaiety than she felt, in order to conceal a secret feeling of vexation.

"Come here, Aitchison, and confess," said Vane, who was a frolicksome, thoughtless young man, scarcely out of his boyhood, and could take more liberties with his cousin than anybody else could; and darting towards the door, he playfully barred the Colonel's passage.

"I have it! Here it is!" cried Mrs. Waterhouse, who had possessed herself of the paper. "Lady Jane Stuart! I declare."

"Nonsense! Don't be so foolish, Harry," said Colonel Aitchison; but Vane held him fast, saying they wanted to congratulate him; and a sort of playful struggle ensued, which created a general laugh. Everybody laughed; not because they were all pleased or amused, Mrs. Waterhouse was in reality very sorry; Louisa and Frances were exceedingly distressed, still they laughed; but there

Mr. Langham and Mr. Damer, wh
where their wives and sister were sit
Longford seemed much distressed.

" I think it looks clearer than it d
" Let us see if we can't get a little fre
the dressing-bell rings."

Isabel was left alone with her sist
husbands; but still that laugh resoun
the halls.

END OF VOL. I.

THE

ADVENTURES OF A BEAUTY.

VOL. II.

THE

ADVENTURES OF A BEAUTY.

BY CATHERINE CROWE.

AUTHOR OF

"SUSAN HOPLEY," "THE STORY OF LILLY DAWSON,"
"THE NIGHTSIDE OF NATURE," &c., &c.

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THE

ADVENTURES OF A BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

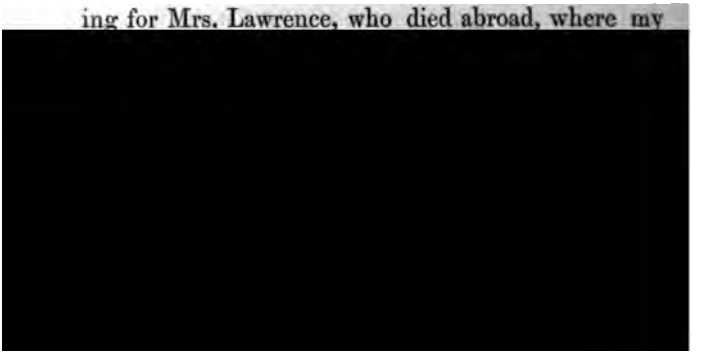
The weary weeks dragged on, and at length Agnes was free to resume the search of her lost child. The oftener she reviewed the circumstances, the more satisfied she felt that the boy had been taken away by an emissary of Lionel's, and the more resolved she was to pursue and reclaim him. Mr. Grosvenor had done her wrong enough, and she had borne it all in silence—making no complaint, seeking no redress; but this last was an injury unbearable. If she was not his wife, he had no right to take away her child. (Wives, we are taught, are defenceless mothers with no rights at all.) And even if it were not so—if her suspicions in this instance wronged him, he was at least bound

to lend his aid towards recovering her lost treasure. So Agnes was no sooner free from Madame de Ville than she started for Paris by way of Brighton and Dieppe, a route recommended to her by Miss Barber, who had travelled it the preceding summer, and who, as Agnes abstained from communicating the real motive of her journey, concluded she was going abroad for the sake of improvement in the arts of dress-making and millinery.

"It is the shortest land journey," she said; "less expensive and less fatiguing; and I'm sure, if you stop at Brighton, my sister will be happy to be of any use to you she can. She lodges at No. 7, West Street, and her name is Mrs. Driscoll; by-the-bye, you saw her here one day, when she was speaking to me in the parlour."

Agnes said she remembered; she was in mourning.

"Yes," answered Miss Barber, "she's in mourning for Mrs. Lawrence, who died abroad, where my



she was in a very good situation at the time, in one of the first families in Sussex. However, what was done couldn't be undone, and by-and-bye she had to go abroad with the regiment; and all sorts of hardships she suffered, first in the transport they went in, and then from living in barracks, so that she was glad enough to get a place as lady's-maid with Mrs. Major Lawrence, and the Major took David. Mrs. Lawrence had not been long married, and being very ill after her confinement, her husband wanted her to come to England; but she wouldn't leave him all he could say; and so at last she died, leaving one little boy; and as the Major was afraid the child might die too, from the climate, he sent him to England under Jane's care; and that's what's taken her to Brighton, for the child has been ill with a scarlet fever, and wants change of air." Miss Barber added that she had a new frock to send to her niece, Jane Driscoll's little girl, and Agnes promised to deliver it.

There were no railways then, and it was two o'clock when Agnes reached Brighton. The packet by which she was to cross the Channel did not sail till evening, so as she had nothing to do, and did not know where else to go, she directed her steps at once to No. 7, West Street, and inquired if Mrs. Driscoll lodged there; the girl said she did, but



with them. There were a great m
various classes playing about; she h
seen so many on one spot. She lo
little faces as she passed, with a
hope that one of them might be the
have given her life to behold;
happened to see a boy of the same a
and temperament as her Willie, so t
could paint a resemblance, she
looked with such longing eyes, t
once the nursery-maids turned up
expression of curiosity or surprise.
and her charges were, however, not
and when a couple of hours h
returned to West Street, and was
up to the second floor, where
Driscoll in a very comfortable ap
somewhat disordered by toys and a

you'll drink a cup of tea before you go on board."

Agnes said she should be very glad of some tea; and whilst Mrs. Driscoll brought out her bread and butter, set her tea-things, and desired the maid of the house to bring up the kettle, and be sure the water boiled, she remarked that she was quite alone for some hours, the children having gone to dine and spend the afternoon with Mrs. Archibald Lawrence, the widow of Major Lawrence's brother, so that she was aunt to the little boy she, Mrs. Driscoll, had the care of. "The Major wrote lately to desire me to come to Brighton, and that Mrs. Archibald would recommend us to a lodging. She has been very civil, and often has the children to dine, which is a relief to me, and gives me a little time to myself. You're going across the water to improve in the dress-making and millinery line, my sister tells me in her letter. Are you going to stay any time?"

"No; I hope not," answered Agnes.

"You should stay a year, at least, if you mean to learn anything, so I'm told. My sister was a year over there, at Victorine's, before she went to Madame de Ville's."

"It will depend on circumstances whether I stay



the singular circumstances [illegible]
acquired a habit of speaking as little a
her own affairs to strangers. Of co
time, as at all times, there was one
dominant in her mind, namely, the los
and yet she felt a certain difficulty in co
her misfortune to Mrs. Driscoll, since
alluding to it, she supposed that Mi
not mentioned the circumstance in
which conclusion, however, she was m
Barber having added a postscript to
"Mrs. Gibson had lately lost her or
had been in sad trouble about him.
she'll tell you about it."

In the second place, she knew she co
upon the subject without tears, and
sirable to go on board the vessel in a
agitation and distress. Added to this,
was not only a perfect stranger, but th

effort rather than a pleasure. Not that she seemed depressed either, but rather uncomfortable and anxious; yet she looked in good health, and everything about her seemed to argue an ease of circumstances beyond what her condition would have entitled her to enjoy. In short, we all know that there are people who invite our confidence, and people who repel it; and Agnes felt that, for some reason she could not define, Mrs. Driscoll belonged to the latter class. She could not weep at ease in her presence. After the first few minutes, the conversation began to lag; and the only subjects they had in common being the mysteries of making caps and dresses, Mrs. Driscoll turned the discourse in that direction, after having expatiated rather ostentatiously on the extraordinary amount of confidence reposed in her by Major Lawrence and his late wife. On one of these occasions, Agnes, by way of saying something, remarked that the care of the boy was a very serious charge, adding: "it would have been a dreadful thing for you if he had died when he had the scarlet fever!" an hypothesis that seemed powerfully to affect Mrs. Driscoll's feelings, for she suddenly turned as red as if she had the scarlet fever herself, and looked quite fierce.

"Oh!" she said, "he was never the least likely to die, nor in any danger whatever. The scarlet

[redacted] nothing at all. Every child has it some time or other.'

Perceiving that her suggestion was not agreeable, Agnes excused herself by observing that Miss Barker had told her the child had been very ill indeed.

'Charlotte knows nothing about it,' answered Mrs. Trevanion, with evident displeasure, 'she always exaggerates everything: he wasn't ill to signify at all.'

On the whole, Agnes was not sorry when she found with apparently purpose to move.

'I have to get a porter to carry my things from the coach-office, where I left them, down to the

[redacted]

him sleeping in the lodging-house beds, for fear he should catch some disorder; so she went to Morton's, the upholsterer's, and bought him that."

"It's very pretty," said Agnes, with a sigh.

There was the impression of the small head yet upon the pillow; and a little nightgown and cap, that had been worn on the preceding night, lay upon the coverlet. Agnes laid her hand upon them—she could not tell why; but it was at once a pain and a pleasure to touch them.

"My boy!" her heart whispered. "Oh! my boy! my boy!"

Having found a porter to carry her luggage to the boat, Agnes accompanied her companion across the Steyne, to a very handsome house on the West Cliff, wherein resided Mrs. Archibald Lawrence. Mrs. Driscoll rang the bell, and the door was answered by a footman in a green livery.

"Are *my* children ready to come away?" she inquired.

"They're gone down to the beach with Missus and Mrs. Tomkins," answered the man.

"Oh! very well; I'm going that way, I dare say I shall meet 'em," said Mrs. Driscoll: "if I don't, I'll call again presently."



for sure. Besides, I want to spe
rence about Master Charles's clothe
are getting too short for him—d
so!"

As she said this, she turned a
man standing at the door.

"The truth is," said she, "I
to bring 'em home. Young lads
fit to be trusted with children; an
soon happens!"

"It does, indeed!" responded
sigh.

"It's only about a fortnight ag
child knocked down by a horse, an
continued Mrs. Driscoll. "It was
too, that was with it; but he was
to somebody he had met with in

alive; and it was frightfully cut and bruised, as it was: but, luckily, not killed. The truth is, children require somebody to be constantly watching 'em: take your eye off 'em for a moment, and they're in mischief directly."

"Misfortunes soon happen!" said Agnes, with a sigh. "God knows, I have reason to say so!"

"I believe you've lately lost a child," said Mrs. Driscoll, with an appearance of sympathy. "Jane mentioned it in her letter, but I did not like to speak of it; it's no use reminding folks of their misfortunes. Was it an accident?"

"Oh, yes," answered Agnes, dropping her veil over her face to conceal her tears. "He had not been out of sight for ten minutes. John Gibson, the person he had been with, left him at the door, whilst he ran on a message. He thought the child had gone into the house, and they thought he was with John; and how it happened, God only knows!"

"Was he run over?" inquired Mrs. Driscoll.

"Oh, no; if he had, we must have heard of it."

"But how was he hurt, then?" inquired the other, who concluded that Agnes had *lost* her child by death.

"He was not hurt, that we know of," answered

Agnes. "He was lost, or stolen, or God know what. From the moment John Gibson left him o the steps, we never saw him again. That's now s weeks ago; and though I have done everything i the world I could, we can hear nothing of him."

Here Mrs. Driscoll suddenly laid her hand o Agnes's arm, and turned her up a side street, th led away from the beach.

"How shocking! how dreadful!" she said, s much affected, that she quite gasped for breath.

"All we could ever learn was, that he was see with a respectable-looking woman, in mourning who took him into a toy-shop, and bought him little tin carriage. She'd a little girl with her and as he had been seen playing with just such little girl for a day or two before, the police thi the child was used as a sort of decoy to my po child."

"How shocking! how dreadful!" gasped M Driscoll again, taking out her pocket handkerch and applying it to her eyes. "I never heard such a dreadful thing! How could anybody such a thing? and what could anybody want w anybody's child? It must have been some beg that did it, to strip it; nobody but a beggar wo do such a thing."

"Oh, no," answered Agnes; that is the puzzl i

part of it. The toy-shop-keeper says that she did not think the person that had him was a lady exactly; but she was very well dressed, and so was the little girl. What could be her motive, God only knows! They say sometimes rich people want children, that have none of their own; it may be that. But, oh! it was cruel to take my poor boy; that was all I had in the world to comfort me."

If Agnes had thought Mrs. Driscoll somewhat chilly before, she certainly had reason now to alter her opinion; for that good woman exhibited an amount of demonstrative sympathy that quite astonished Agnes. Neither John nor Martha had appeared half so overcome at her misfortune, as this stranger was. At length, when she was able to utter anything but interjections, she said:

"And was it in France this happened?"

"No," answered Agnes, looking round at her with surprise; the child was with a friend of mine that lives at the Adelphi Hotel."

"Oh, dear me!" suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Driscoll, looking down an opening that led to the sea—"if there isn't the packet just a going off."

"Oh, good gracious!" exclaimed Agnes, quite agitated; "what shall I do?"

"Run!" said the other, at the same time setting



stouter was still more out of bre
herself.

"This way! this way!" cri
seizing her arm, and dragging h
in which were some sailors, and
luggage. "You had better not
she continued. "You can't think
get left behind! They go off in
you know where you are; and if yo
there won't be another. How
Good-bye! good-bye!"

"Oh, my box! Where's the m
and my bag?" cried Agnes, as Mrs.
her into the boat.

"There they are!" said Mrs. D
they're all safe."

"Sit down!" said the sailors; "

"Where?" cried Agnes, as they

she could not tell whether they were or not; and as the boat heaved over the surf, she lost her footing, and falling backwards she would certainly have gone over into the water had not the man at the helm caught her, and fixed her in a seat. She was so confused with all this hurry and bustle that she scarcely knew where she was, or saw or heard anything, till a boat passed them coming from the ship; and as her eye followed it to the shore, she saw Mrs. Driscoll not far from the spot on which they had parted, approaching a lady; behind whom walked a maid-servant, leading a child, who had on a wide-brimmed straw hat, with a black ribbon round the crown. Just behind them, came a little girl, apparently a couple of years or so older than the first, who, by its costume, she judged was a boy.

This was, doubtless, Mrs. Archibald Lawrence and Mrs. Tomkins with the two children. When Mrs. Driscoll reached them; the lady and the maid stopped to speak to her, and the two children stooped down, and began picking up stones or shells. Agnes could not discern their features; but the little boy, like all little boys, interested her, because he was just the size of her own Willie. It was he who slept in the pretty crib, and wore the little nightgown and cap; and she



[illegible] towards the boat: the com
[illegible] Mrs. Driscoll q
[illegible] boy by the hand, and made
but Mrs. Lawrence had something
was not till she had made two or
attempts at getting away that she
then catching the boy up in her ar
the girl somewhat roughly by the
hastily off towards the town, whil
her maid strolled onwards along the

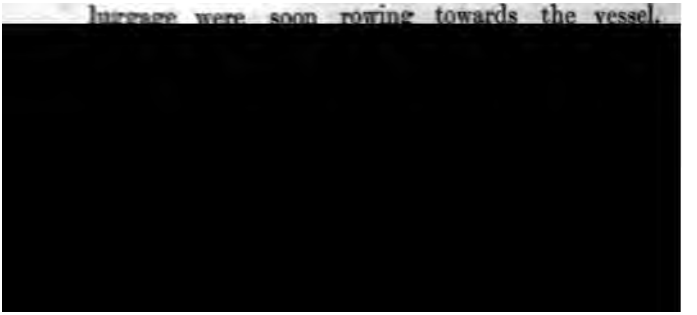
CHAPTER II.

As soon as Agnes found herself on board the packet, her first care was her luggage; and as Mrs. Driscoll had assured her that it was in the boat, she leant over the bulwark to watch its unlading. Box after box, bag after bag, made their appearance, but her own was not amongst them, whereupon she naturally became somewhat uneasy; and the more so, when she recollected that the man who had undertaken to convey them to the beach would probably not be disposed to relinquish them till he had secured his remuneration. Having communicated her trouble to the boatmen, they promised to inquire for the things, pay the porter, and bring them on board; so reposing in this hope, she went below to secure a berth, as

Mrs. Driscoll had strenuously recommended h[illegible] doing immediately.

She found only one person in the ladies' cabi[illegible] and she appeared to be unwell; or perhaps bein[illegible] afraid of becoming so, she had lain down in th[illegible] hope of averting sickness. At all events, she wa[illegible] snug in her berth with the curtains drawn; an[illegible] had she not been seized with an irrepressible fit o[illegible] coughing, Agnes would not have discovered her presence at all. Having established a claim to the adjoining bed by placing in it her parasol and a cloak she had carried over her arm, she reascended to the deck to watch for the arrival of her luggage.

Besides the lady above-mentioned, there were a few steerage passengers aboard, and two or three elderly steady-looking people on the quarter-deck, who looked as if they had been determined, come what might, they would not be too late. The beach, however, showed symptoms of further embarkations, and several boats with passengers and luggage were soon rowing towards the vessel.



voyage, or go without her property, either very vexatious. She felt not a little provoked with Mrs. Driscoll too, for so needlessly hurrying her away, since she saw no symptoms of the vessel's sailing even yet, though she had been already three-quarters of an hour on board. Whilst engaged with these reflections, she heard somebody inquire of a sailor where the captain was.

"He's not come aboard yet, Sir," answered the man.

"Why, it's past seven o'clock," said the gentleman, looking at his watch; "he ought to be here."

"Plenty o' time, Sir," responded the sailor. "The tide won't serve for us to get into Dieppe harbour till to-morrow forenoon."

Whilst the traveller uttered sundry lamentations and complaints regarding the want of punctuality, and the incorrectness of intelligence respecting the packets, Agnes applied herself to learn whether there might not be time for her to go ashore, and look after her luggage herself. It being decided that she might do so, without danger of losing her passage, provided she made haste, she was assisted into a boat that was then alongside, and rowed to the beach.

One of the difficulties she had to contend with was, that she did not feel sure of recognizing the

man; having trusted to recognizing her boxes, and to Mrs. Driscoll, who had summoned him off the street. There was a good deal of luggage still unembarked, and several porters to be seen; but her own things not being visible, she thought her best expedient was to run to the coach-office at once, which she did; but they had not seen the luggage since it was carried away, neither had they observed who had taken it, since she herself was present at the time. Her last resource, therefore, was to go to Mrs. Driscoll, and inquire the man's name. The maid said she was at home; and heated, excited, and out of breath, Agnes rushed up the stairs, and burst into the room, where Mrs. Driscoll

"Your luggage!" gasped Mrs. Driscoll, speaking as if she was suffering from a fit of spasmodic asthma, "I don't know where it is. Isn't it on board?"

If Agnes had been well read in the tricks occasionally practised on unexperienced travellers, she might have been apt to suspect that Mrs. Driscoll had not only got her boxes, but that they were safely stowed in the next room; for whilst she spoke, she moved round the table, so as to place herself exactly between Agnes and the door, which had been ajar, but which she now closed.

"No," returned she. "You said you saw it in the boat, but it was not there; and I shall lose my passage, if I can't find the man."

"Mother, mother!" cried a small voice from the adjoining room, "Charley's getting out of his crib, and he'll tumble."

"Be quiet, and be still, you naughty child," cried Mrs. Driscoll, through the door. "I'll whip you if you don't lie still, and go to sleep directly. Really, Mrs. Gibson," she added, turning sharply on Agnes, "I'm not answerable for your luggage. The porter told me he'd put it on board, and I paid him the shilling for you, and I can't do no more. You'd better go to the coach-office, and look for him yourself."

"I have," said Agnes, "and they don't know which man it was. All I wanted of you, Ma'am, was to tell me his name."

"How should I know his name?" answered Mrs. Driscoll, impatiently. "I don't know nothing about the man, and I can't waste more time about it; so I'll wish you good evening, Ma'am."

There was evidently no more to be said, so, indignant at the rudeness and inhumanity of the woman, and heartily regretting that she had ever gone near her, Agnes turned on her heel, and departed at the very moment that another "Mother! Mother!" from the adjoining room announced that Charley was doing something he ought not. But she hadn't reached the bottom of the stairs, when she suddenly remembered that she had not given Mrs. Driscoll the shilling she said she had paid the porter, and as under the present unpleasant circumstances she could not think of remaining in her debt, she took out her purse and retraced her steps. As she ascended, she heard the voice of a child crying, and Mrs. Driscoll in loud objurgation. Charley had clearly either tumbled out of bed, or was being whipped to keep him in it. There was something about the little voice that so reminded her of her own Willie that her heart almost stood still as she

listened to it; but time pressed, so she opened the door, and advancing towards the one that separated the two rooms, she said:

"I came back to pay you the shilling, Ma'am!" Mrs. Driscoll, who seemed in a violent passion, had evidently not heard her approach, and Agnes had just time to see her leaning over the crib with an uplifted arm, when the other, perceiving her, darted forward into the front room, shutting the door behind her, and placing her back against it, pouring out at the same time, on the unlucky intruder such a volley of abuse as took away her breath.

"What did Mrs. Gibson mean by forcing herself into her house in this way? She knew nothing at all about her, and didn't wish to know! She wished people wouldn't send people to her as she didn't want. Did Mrs. Gibson suppose she'd stole her dirty boxes?"

"I didn't wish to remain in your debt, Ma'am," said Agnes, retreating, "and I'm sure you can't be more sorry for the introduction than I am!" and with that she once more descended the stairs and let herself into the street.

What was to be done next? She could not think of going without her luggage, and she had just resolved to renounce the idea of crossing the water

that night, when she met the very man she was seeking, in the street. She would not have known him but he recognized her.

"I put your luggage aboard, Ma'am," said he, and then when they came to an explanation, it appeared, that having other commissions on hand, he had embarked it before she and her companion reached the beach, trusting to seeing them afterwards. Agnes's hasty departure had caused him to miss her, but meeting Mrs. Driscoll on her return with the children, she had paid him the shilling, and told him the lady had just gone off to the vessel. The danger now was, that whilst her baggage was conveyed to France, she would be left behind; but the man told her that if she made haste she would still be in time, and as he good-naturedly accompanied her, and put her into a boat, she just saved her distance.

All this anxiety and worry, however, had overheated and fatigued her, and being afraid to encounter the cool evening air on deck, when the ship began to move she descended to the cabin and took possession of her berth, as did several other female passengers.

"Stewardess!" cried a languishing voice from the adjoining couch, when they had been about half an hour afloat, "Stewardess! are we off yet?"

"Oh! yes, Ma'am!" answered the stewardess, "we've been afloat this half-hour."

"I'm so faint, I think I should like something," continued Agnes's neighbour, who was she who had so early taken possession of her berth.

"Would you like a little brandy-and-water, Ma'am?" asked the stewardess.

"I think I should," answered the other, "and something to eat with it. Have you got a cold fowl and some ham?"

The stewardess said she had, and immediately set about producing her provisions, whilst the lady got out of bed and prepared to eat. The sea was quite smooth, leaving people's stomachs undisturbed. Agnes had had a great deal of running about, and at the sight of the food, she began to recollect she had had no dinner; nothing in short since she left London, but rather a scanty allowance of bread and butter at Mrs. Driscoll's.

"I should like something to eat, too, stewardess," said she, stepping out of her berth.

"We had better eat together, I think," said the lady. "Here's plenty for both of us."

"Thank you, Ma'am," answered Agnes, with a certain degree of hesitation; for the fashionable appearance of the lady, who had not divested herself

Come and sit down, here's plen
the sofa for both of us," said the la
we had better make use of our time
we can. If the sea rises, it will spoil
Are you sick at sea ?"

"I don't know; I never was at
answered Agnes.

"Oh! I have crossed the Chann
said the stranger, "and I do pretty
a smooth passage. I don't know wh
we're likely to have now. Then y
been in France ?"

"Never."

"Perhaps I may be of some use to
I am well acquainted with Paris. Ar
make any stay ?"

"I don't know," replied Agnes. "
upon circumstances."

Inquiries, advice, and offers of s

a sound sleep followed, from which she did not thoroughly awake, till disturbed by the movement that ensued in consequence of the agreeable information that they were within sight of Dieppe.

CHAPTER III.

When Agnes looked out from between her
the morning, she saw her new ac-
to wish

the lady, whose name, by the inscription on the box, proved to be Mrs. Aymer.

Agnes declined; but the other insisted and prevailed. "Yours is so tumbled," she said, "that you must oblige me." It was evident that this obliging stranger had taken a fancy to her; so they went to breakfast together, and afterwards sat side by side on the deck, till they stepped ashore at Dieppe. Nor did her civilities cease when they became more needful than before; for Agnes knew only a few words of French, which she had picked up in her childhood from Madame Charpentier and her young friends at Ravenscliffe; and Mrs. Aymer's company and assistance at the custom-house, and in arranging the continuation of the journey, were really a great convenience to her.

"And where are you going to in Paris?" inquired that lady.

"I shall stop at the inn the coach puts up at," answered Agnes.

"Oh dear! that won't do at all. The diligences stop at the Messageries," answered Mrs. Aymer. "Have you nobody coming to meet you?"

"I know nobody in Paris," answered Agnes.

"You know nobody in Paris! and you can't speak French! Well, I really think it's fortunate

[redacted] Gracious, my dear! Do yo[redacted] a practice of running about the world wit[redacted] your pretty face if yours without knowing whe[redacted] you're going to?"

"I have never travelled yet at all," returne[redacted] Agnes, "and I'm afraid I'm very inexperienced."

"Inexperienced indeed!" said Mrs. Ayme[redacted] turning her to the back. "But I must real[redacted] consider how you had best manage, or Heav[redacted] knows what may befal you in that city of sinner[redacted] You know nobody, you say? Nobody! neith[redacted] French nor English?"

"No," replied Agnes, "I don't know anybody

"Now, don't think me impertinent," continu[redacted]

prehension. "French or English?" she inquired.

"English," answered Agnes.

"Do you know where he lives?"

"No," answered Agnes, with a certain qualm at the *he*.

"But you're sure he's in Paris?"

"Yes; at least, almost sure. I know he was there lately," with another pang at the pronoun.

"Humph! there are many ways of finding people in Paris, at least, where the name is not disguised. There's the police, to begin with."

"Oh, no!" answered Agnes, alarmed at the the name of the police. "I wouldn't have anything to do with the police for the world! Besides, it's a gentleman."

"You mean a man of condition? a man of rank?"

"Yes," responded Agnes, blushing deeper than before.

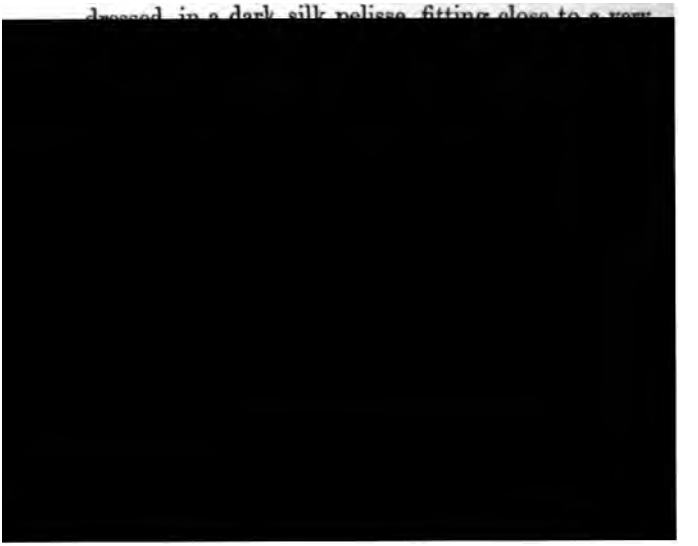
"Then we shall have no trouble whatever, every man of that sort is easily found at Galignani's, where they all put down their name and address. So that matter being settled, the only thing we have to consider is your lodging. What do you say to putting up at an *hôtel garni*? it's a place something between a lodging-house and an hotel."

"If it's not expensive," said Agnes.

"Oh, they're at all prices; dear, cheap, and middling. I'm going to one in the Rue St. Honoré, which is moderate enough; and I think the best thing you can do is to stay there for a night, at least, till we've time to look about us."

Agnes thought it was, and accepted the proposition; so they started together in the *diligence*, for I write of a period anterior to railways, and as they lumbered along the paved road, Agnes sat wondering who and what her new acquaintance could be.

She was a handsome woman of perhaps four or five and thirty; she might be a year or two more but she was *bien conservée*, and exceedingly well



had grown upon the hand. She had on a wedding ring, and a diamond guard; and her slate-coloured prunella boots, tipped with black leather, fitted as neatly as the gloves. She had also a handsome white Cashmere shawl, which she threw over her shoulders when needful; and besides the small carton already mentioned, her luggage consisted of a middling-sized trunk, a carpet-bag, and a silk umbrella, the whole of these appointments distinguished by the same air of neatness and good order which pervaded her own person.

What could she be? Experienced people would have hesitated betwixt a fashionable milliner from London, a professional man's wife, and a lady of impeachable character. She might be any of these; but Agnes could only connect that off-hand easy manner with the idea of a certain degree of rank and independence, nor could she divest herself of a feeling of diffidence whilst accepting her civilities. "I think I ought to tell her who I am, and how I am situated," haunted her mind, whilst at the same time her extreme unwillingness to disclose her sad secret kept her silent.

When Agnes appeared dressed on the following morning, to accompany her friend to Galignani's, the latter looked at her with a critical and approving

eye. Though nothing could be plainer than her black gros-de-Naples, and straw bonnet trimmed with white ribbons, they were well made and put on; whilst the grace of her person, and her really distinguished style of beauty, could not escape so experienced an observer as Mrs. Aymer, who remarked with jesting complacency, that she flattered herself two better-looking Englishwomen would not walk the streets of Paris that day.

"Now, my dear," said she, as they walked along, "you must tell me the name of your friend."

"What friend?" inquired Agnes.

"Your male friend—the gentleman you want to find. We can't learn his address, you know, with-

: sort. He'll put it in his pocket and forget it, perhaps throw it in the fire, and desire his rant to deny him when you call."

' Why should you think so?" inquired Agnes, azed at the acquaintance with her private cons this opinion seemed to argue. "Do you ow him?"

" Not at all; never saw him in my life; but I ow the sex, and I know the world; and I know t, in certain circumstances, if you want to get l of a man, you must surprise him."

I can't think he would refuse to see me," said es.

No, my dear; women never can think *he* will e to see them; but *he* generally does, for all You're obliged to run all the way to Paris him, at any rate; that don't look very *coming*, k."

But I couldn't go to the house," urged Agnes. hould see other people."

And they know you?"

Yes.

C'est autre chose! we must find some other then. I wonder what his habits are; whether alks or rides? I'll tell you what, we'll go and nnoitre the ground."

gnes trembled at the mere idea of approaching



"That's their carriage, I su
their liveries?" inquired she,
out of the gates.

Agnes hung down her l
answered; "those are his s
didn't see me!"

"Not they! Now what do
this be a good time, when the

"But there's Sir Francis
urged Agnes. "Oh no! I
write."

"Well, as you please; but I
returned the other. "When
pursuing, and requires to be p
for it, there is no animal more

When they returned hom
letter, and to guard against ac
post herself.

of Mrs. Aymer, too, was certainly cheering, and her *savoir faire* useful; though at the same time, the tone of her remarks, and the want of delicacy with which she had pressed herself into her confidence, were rather repulsive; still she was so good-natured and obliging, and Agnes felt so sensibly how forlorn her entry into Paris would have been without her kind offices, that she resolved to remain where she was for the present.

Another question that arose was, should she or not take her into her confidence wholly, or leave her to her conjectures. What those conjectures were, Agnes shrank from penetrating. They could not be favourable, yet the impression did not seem to be unfavourable; or why was she so friendly? It occurred to Agnes that her indifference did not speak very well for herself. Still she was a married woman, for she wore a wedding-ring; and her husband was alive, for she had alluded more than once to Aymer, as to a person in the flesh. Neither did anything appear incorrect in her conduct, though what she had come to Paris for did not appear.

In the course of the day, she met an acquaintance, a young Frenchman, whom she called Monsieur Adelmar, and whom she engaged to accompany them at night to the Variétés; which he did, and escorted them afterwards to the door of their hotel;

but he did not enter their apartments, nor did she invite him to do so. If she had any mission in Paris at all, it seemed to be to spend money; for although the lodging she had selected was not expensive, Agnes was surprised at the number of articles of dress she bought that were so.

CHAPTER IV.

Agnes had not told Lionel that she suspected he had robbed her of her child, fearing that if he wished to retain the boy, he would simply refuse to see her, or give her any information. She desired to obtain an interview, under the idea of making an appeal that might work upon his feelings. Besides, she wished to judge from her own observation whether he was the guilty party or not; however, he did not seem disposed to give her an opportunity, for a week passed without the arrival of an answer.

When Mrs. Aymer heard this, she said it was exactly what she had expected. "He'll never write to you, depend upon it; and if you want to see him, you must adopt my plan at last."

"What plan? You know I told you I cannot go to the house."

"In the first place, French houses are not like English ones. You may go to visit one member of a family fifty times, without meeting the others; but I suspect it's too late for that now. I have no doubt he has given orders to be denied to you. By-the-by, you might go disguised, though."

"Oh, never," exclaimed Agnes; "I couldn't do such a thing."

"There is a vulgar proverb, my dear, which says that necessity has no law: and if you must see this Mr. Jones, you must submit to accomplish your object how you can. Don't be angry with me for

affair of the heart. If I'm wrong, I beg your pardon."

"I ought not to have been so touchy, when you have been so kind," returned Agnes; "but the circumstances of my story are very peculiar, and I feel so mortified and embarrassed, because I know I must appear to others what I am not."

"Well, my dear, many people appear better than they are, and some appear worse; I confess I prefer the latter, considerably. Whatever the circumstances you allude to may be, I can't guess; but I judge from what I see of you, and I'm not very often mistaken on such points, I can tell you."

"And what is it you see?" asked Agnes.

"Why, I see that you are an injured woman, though exactly in what way, of course, I don't know; but I am quite certain that you have either been the victim of your own heart, or of a deception; and you have no idea what allowance I can make for women in either case. I first took a fancy to you on board the packet, because you are so pretty; and I like handsome people. If you get nothing else out of them, they are at least good to look at. But I have quite another sort of interest in you now; I see that you are an injured woman,



"I'll tell you what," rejoined M
make a bargain with you. If y
story. I'll tell you mine; and
speak first."

Agnes was not unwilling to ent
pact, feeling that the truth wo
much more favourable to her tha
conjectures; and the proposal bei
lady promised to commence her n
However, the communication was
accident of her meeting some acq
Boulevards, who invited her to sp
with them at their apartments i
Helder; requesting politely that h
accompany her. Mrs. Aymer intr
Monsieur and Madame St. George.
ever, was an Englishwoman; and her
the facility with which he spoke

some; but time and fat were fast abating her attractions. She also was *très bien mise;* and there was something extremely cordial and friendly in her demeanour.

"You'll excuse my going with you," said Agnes to Mrs. Aymer. "I don't know Mr. and Mrs. St. George; and I have no spirits for visiting."

"Take my advice and go!" answered her friend. "In the first place, the St. Georges are very agreeable people; and in the next, they may be useful to you, particularly if I leave Paris before you. Besides, I shall really take it as a favour if you'll go; because I know they would like it."

Agnes complied; and was on the whole not sorry that she had done so. The host and hostess paid her the most marked attention; and the few guests, consisting chiefly of gentlemen, were extremely agreeable and well-bred. The apartments were elegant; and the company was attended by servants in a handsome livery of blue and gold. The suite consisted of four rooms, in one of which where the door was occasionally opened, Agnes observed several gentlemen standing round a table; in the adjoining one there were others playing at cards; whilst in the outer chamber, to which she wholly confined herself, a very handsome woman was singing Italian airs to the pianoforte. Everything



pleased and amused.

On the following morn
menced her promised rev
her father was a clergyma
that having no mother to lo
away with one of them—a y
promised to marry her; "A
she said, "that there wa
strong, who really wished
and who would have been
I had had the sense to accep

"And did not you like hi

"I dare say I might h
sooner did Lord C—— dis
was really paying his addr
pride or his conceit, or the
in him, took the alarm, and
love to me himself. And al

moonlight night I went off with him. It was at the vacation time, when the young men went home; and he arranged to have a carriage ready for me about a hundred yards from the parsonage. He brought me to Paris and deserted me. That was my first visit here."

"And what did you do?"

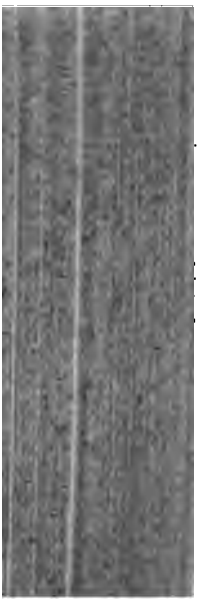
"Why, I wrote to him letter after letter; I waylaid him; I went to his lodgings. I left nothing undone to move him. But it was all in vain. My letters he didn't answer. When I tried to speak to him in the street he threatened me with the police; and when I went to his hotel, his servants turned me out of doors. At last, I fell ill from the distraction of my mind; for I loved him passionately. For three weeks I was delirious, and I should have died, I dare say, if the people where I lodged had not sent for a physician. He was an elderly man; and when I came to my senses, I told him my story; for he saw I was in great trouble, and asked me the cause. Upon this, he offered to go to Lord C——; and he did. What passed I don't exactly know; but when he came back, he shrugged his shoulders, and advised me to go home to my father. But I was ashamed to do this; I couldn't bear to face either him or my former friends, and I consulted the doctor how I might stay here; but

he said he couldn't advise a *belle jeune femme* like me to reside alone in Paris; and, at length, he persuaded me to write a letter to my father, in which I confessed and lamented my fault, and begged for pardon: but it was quite useless, as I had expected. My father answered, that I had ruined him and myself; that all his pupils had been withdrawn in consequence of the disgrace I had brought upon him; that he *could* not receive me into his house if he would, and that he wouldn't if he could.

"'All I can do for you, or ever will do,' continued the letter, 'is to pay for your board, if you choose to go into Sussex, and live with your Aunt

too; and a very different kind of aunt she was to Aunt Jackson. She was an old lady who had once been very handsome, and who had not forgotten it; and she was as vain at seventy as if she had been seventeen; but she was also good-natured and romantic, and the story of my misfortunes moved her so that she desired her nephew to bring me to see her. She was very kind, and did not reproach me with my folly, for which I felt most grateful.

"Lord C—— had not left me destitute; but my resources were now nearly exhausted; and the first necessity was, that I should find a means of earning my living; and so I told Madame Harlai. She offered me money; but I refused it, saying, I had been a gentlewoman in my own country, and that I could not take alms. At length, I obtained through her recommendation a situation as English governess in a French boarding-school; and as I had received a very respectable education from my father, I was capable enough for what I had to teach."



s were over, we English used to congregate ther; and as one has a tender affection for one's patriots abroad which they by no means inspire ome, we became very intimate and loving. The y inconvenience was, that they were always ing me what part of England I lived in, and a riety of similar questions, which I could not swer without inconvenience; for how did I know at some of them might have friends in my father's eighbourhood, and that so my unlucky story might ranspire."

"And what did you answer when they asked where you came from?" inquired Agnes, in whose breast the similarities and differences of this story with her own had awakened considerable interest.

"Why, I said I came from London," returned Mrs. Aymer, and that generally put a stop to their nquiries; but I confess, as I am naturally sincere, never could say this without a very uncomfortable eeling and a good deal of confusion, which was not iminished by finding it was observed. Instead, owever, of suspecting anything like the real cause f my distress, the young ladies concluded, as I iscovered from something I accidentally overheard, hat my family were in an inferior condition of life, nd that I was ashamed of my humble origin; and

as they had no desire to mortify me, they hence abstained from the subject.

"For some months everything went on smo enough. The young people liked me, and I tried to do my duty, for sad experience had t me the value of a home, and I was most desir keeping my situation. I remember it was onl day preceding a circumstance I am going to r that Madame Regnier expressed her entire sat tion with my conduct, and the progress the were making under my tuition. *Mais!* a French say;" and here Mrs. Aymer shrugge shoulders like a veritable Parisian.

"Near where we lived, in the Faubourg du F there is a garden called Mousseaux, belongi

myself, and by some turn of luck recover my place in society. I was, therefore, content to keep out of sight in the mean time. But it was not so to be.

"As we did not often meet anybody in the garden, we amused ourselves in it much as if it had been our own, without constraint; but one day, as we were sitting on the grass under the trees, we heard voices and footsteps approaching from behind.

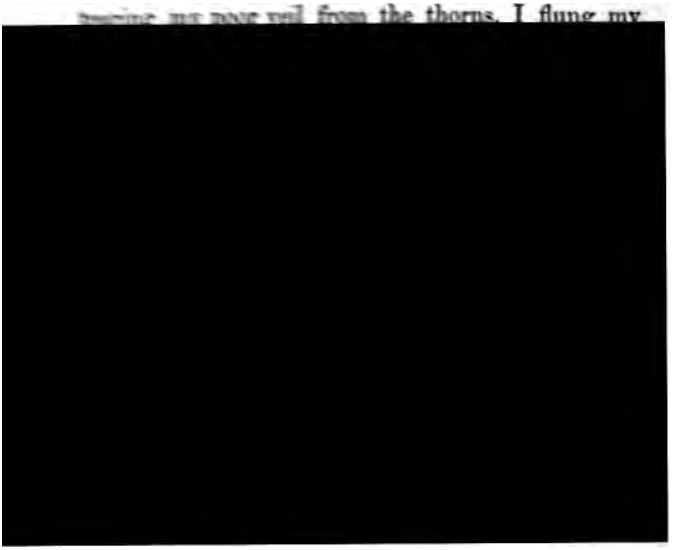
"'Voici du monde!' said one of the French girls; whereupon we all rose, and caught up our bonnets; but by a refinement of ill luck, a Chantilly veil that was on mine got entangled in a rose-bush, and whilst I was trying to extricate it the strangers were upon us.

"'Permettez-moi, Mademoiselle!' said a young man, stepping forward to my assistance. 'You'll hurt your hands.'

"I looked up to thank him, whilst one of the young ladies, twitching my dress, whispered: 'C'est le Duc de Chartres!'

"I confess that this information confused me a little, whilst at the same time it awakened my curiosity. Close behind him stood two other persons: one of them an exceedingly beautiful woman, who so attracted me—for you know I

[redacted] for a moment or two I [redacted] at his companion, on whose arm [redacted] in a sort of loving, confiding [redacted] When my eyes did move to the other [redacted] of my feelings when I saw that it was [redacted], who appeared at the same moment to [redacted] What I felt I will not [redacted] describe. My heart seemed to have [redacted] my throat, my knees shook under me, [redacted] a dizzy, chilly sensation creeping through [redacted] On the contrary, became suddenly [redacted] and I saw that the meeting was not more [redacted] to him than to myself. Of course I [redacted] my eyes immediately, and relentlessly [redacted] my pale veil from the thorns. I flung my



and the story ran through the school, reaching those who had not been present when the thing happened, and who, of course, made more of it than the others.

"Amongst these were two young ladies called Wallace, the daughters of a Baronet, who, in order not to be separated from them, had come to reside in Paris whilst they were at school. Every Saturday they went home, in order to attend the Ambassador's chapel with their parents, on Sunday morning; and as my unfortunate rencontre happened on a Saturday, they were not with me, which they said they regretted the more, because they were acquainted with the Duc de Chartres.

"'But we shall certainly tell him who you are,' they said, 'and what an impression he has made on your susceptible heart.'

"I entreated them not, till the tears stood in my eyes; but my urgency only diverted them, and made them fancy they really were in possession of a secret worth telling.

"I can't tell you how miserable all this made me. There was an end of my tranquillity. Every time I walked out I expected to meet Lord C——; and every Sunday night, when these girls came home, I expected something disagreeable, though I did not know exactly what; and it came at last,

though not till so many weeks had el
that I was beginning to hope my fears
groundless.

"We English, you must know, all breal
and drank tea together; an arrangement th
been made in consequence of the discover
apples and plums and sour wine did not suit
stomachs at eight o'clock in the morning,
the French did very well with such fare.
governesses liked tea too, such tea as it wa
from economical motives, I suppose, we too
at their table; and very chatty little part
often had. Well, it was, I dare say, six o
weeks after my adventure in the garden

"'Qu'est-ce qu'il y a donc, Madame?' inquired Madame Bordelais.

Madame Regnier closed her lips, bowed her head slightly with a haughty expression, and handed the paper in silence to her partner.

"'Mais qu'est-ce que cela veut dire?'" cried Madame Bordelais, who was of a gayer, more animated temperament than the other.

"'Nous verrons demain, j'espère,' answered Madame Regnier, proudly.

"'Mais c'est inconcevable!' exclaimed Madame Bordelais, with a little contemptuous laugh.

"'Allons, Mademoiselle, ayez la bonté de verser le thé, s'il vous plait!' said Madame Regnier, turning towards me, whose business it was to make and pour out the tea; a duty which, I had been too much engrossed with what was passing, to remember.

"The fact is, that from the moment I heard where the letter came from, and observed its effect upon Madame Regnier, I had an instinctive conviction that it was the harbinger of mischief to me. I suppose my alarm was painted on my countenance, for certain it is, that as soon as Madame Regnier turned her eyes upon me, a new light, or at least a new suspicion, seemed to break upon her mind. I read it instantly in her face; and no doubt my

confusion, and the trembling of the hand that held the heavy Britannia metal tea-pot, must have confirmed it.

"However, she said nothing, for she was a very well-bred woman; and the tea-drinking went on, as usual, except that she scarcely spoke again, and I said never a word. Neither could I eat a morsel, though we dined early and badly; and our tea was our supper. I felt dreadfully uncomfortable whilst the meal lasted, and yet I dreaded its termination; for I was afraid Madame Regnier would detain me, and speak to me when the others were gone; but she did not; she suffered me to leave the room with the ladies, and as I always went last, I saw her draw her letter from her pocket, and prepare for

"What to do I didn't know. I kept aloof from everybody, as if I knew I was a leper; and the worst of it was, I had not a corner to myself to go and shed my tears in, for I slept in a room with ten others.

"I staid in the garden, though it was a cold, damp autumn evening, till the last bell rang, and then I slunk up stairs, assisted the young ladies to bed, and lay down upon my own, to toss and turn in a fever of misery all night."

CHAPTER VI.

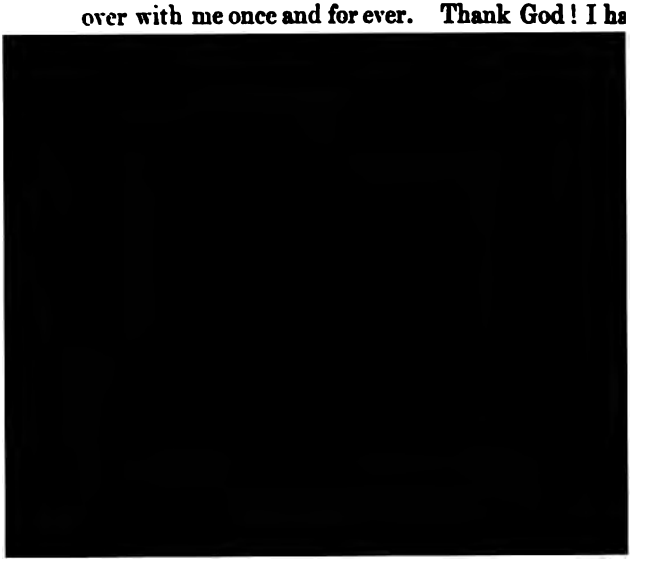
"YES, that was a dreadful r
Mrs. Aymer, when she resumed h
thoughts, what projects chased e
my unhappy brain! How my h
often I turned my hot pillow and
my poor burning body from s
weary I was of the night and
the morning; for I felt certain by
saying they would learn on the
[illegible] that Sir James

I should be turned out of doors in presence of the whole school, with every contumely that could be heaped upon my unfortunate head.

"And then I asked myself if I was so guilty and so infamous? I had done wrong, certainly—very wrong; of course I knew when I quitted my father's house, that I was acting very imprudently; but I had attached no idea of criminality to the act, for I never doubted Lord C——'s marrying me; I had been doubtless, very foolish, but I was young, and in love; and I had tried to redeem my error. But I saw the world would not let me. I had taken a step downwards, and it would push me the rest of the way. Very well, be it so; I would go and live amongst bad people—people of lost reputations; they won't reject me, they can't look down upon me. Indeed, it was probable that necessity would force me to do so, whether I would or no; for I could not again expect to obtain a situation, nor could I have ventured to accept one. I felt very much grieved about Madame Harlai too, who had been so kind to me, for I foresaw that she would be called to account for the recommendation she had given; and I determined not to go near her, nor trouble her again with my misfortunes; but to write, thanking her for her kindness, and expressing

my deep regret that she should incur any annoya
on my account.

"Amidst all this conflict of thoughts and feelin
it is singular that Lord C—— played a very sm
part. I had suffered dreadfully when he forsc
me; but the struggle, and fever, and delirium t
followed, seemed to have exhausted my power
suffering on that subject. I confess that I
ceased altogether to care for, or to regret him; a
that he inspired me with much more contempt th
resentment. What he had done was so base a
so vile, and so meanly selfish, that I thorough
despised him. No; *les souffrances du cœur* w
over with me once and for ever. Thank God! I ha



dreadful night; and I arose and assisted the ladies to dress, and went through my duties as usual, till breakfast-time; a moment I dreaded, as I had then to meet Madame Regnier and Madame Bordelais, and I was afraid they would broach the horrid subject. But they did not, and the breakfast went off as usual, only that when one of the young ladies inquired when the Miss Wallaces would return, Madame Regnier answered, 'she didn't know,' in such a dry, forbidding tone, that I concluded they were not coming back at all. Besides this, there was nothing particular in their demeanour, except that I observed Madame Bordelais' eyes frequently fixed upon me with an expression of curiosity, and I thought, pity; I dare say she did pity me, for she was a lively, good-natured, soft-hearted creature, and a Frenchwoman to her fingers' ends. Besides English, I had to teach music to the beginners, and Monday being one of the days appropriated for my lessons in crotchets and quavers, instead of going to the school-room as usual, my business lay in a small *salon* adjoining the large one, and communicating with it by a door, the upper part of which was of glass, shaded by a green silk curtain. The windows of each of these rooms led into the garden.

"It was in the large *salon* that company was



namely, the arrival of my accus

"It was mid-day, however, finished my music lessons, bef in the adjoining *salon*, that bet of visitors; whereupon, as the s ment was audible from one roo retreated by the garden, as I ha do on all such occasions. To school-room, I had to cross the I saw Sir James Wallace's carri also a *fiacre* driving in, out of whi Harlai's friendly face. The idea curred to me that she had been s account of her *protégée*, and in mortification I was seeking to a saw me, and called me to her as sh

"'Qu'est-ce qu'il y a donc?'

"'I don't know,' I said: 'bu

walked with one; whilst I went forward to the school-room where my business lay.

"I had to give lessons in English next, and you may guess what sort of lessons they were that day, for I momentarily expected to be summoned and turned out of doors. However, fully an hour or more passsed without any light being thrown upon my fate, when Margot entered the school-room, and told me I was wanted below. I followed her out, with the feelings of a criminal about to be led to execution; but, to my agreeable surprise, instead of taking me to the *salon*, she conducted me to Madame Harlai, who I saw sitting in the hackney coach, and beckoning to me, whilst Lady Wallace's carriage was no longer visible.

"'Have you packed up your things?' she said.

"'No,' I replied; 'but I can do it in a moment.'

"'Allez! Vite!' said she; 'and come back as soon as you can. I'll wait for you here.'

"I leave you to judge if I was long getting ready! I flew up stairs, tied up my few clothes in a large shawl I had, and was with her again in less than ten minutes.

"'Montez,' said she, bidding the coachman open the door.

"I jumped in, and away we drove; and never did I feel more relieved in my life, than when old Margot shut the gates upon us.

"My first words were, 'O Dieu, que vous êtes bonne!' and if ever a creature felt grateful for a helping hand in extremity, I'm sure I did then.

"'But how came you to be here? Were you sent for?'

"'Yes,' she said. 'I received a note this morning from Madame Regnier, requesting me to come to her at noon, as she had something very particular to say to me about you. My mind misgave me there was mischief. But how came Lord C—— to find out where you were?'

"'Ah, Madame Harlai! C'est heureux!' exclaimed Madame Bordelais; whilst Madame Regnier declared that she was quite unable to understand the meaning of so extraordinary a circumstance; but that, perhaps, I could explain it.

"'It was this lady,' she said, "who recommended Miss Grieves to us; and when I tell you that she is the *très respectable tante* of the *célèbre* Docteur Harlai, I hope you will admit that we could have no reason to doubt the character of a young person she so warmly patronised.'

"I thought it was now time for me to put in a word; so I said that I had understood Miss Grieves was giving every satisfaction, and I hoped she had not altered her conduct.

"'By no means,' said Madame Bordelais. 'She is very capable, and very attentive; but Lady Wallace has received information that Miss Grieves is not a proper person to be admitted into a house of this description.'

"'Of this description!' exclaimed Miladi; 'of no description! Of course, Madame, you were not aware of this person's character?'

"'Cela dépend,' said I. 'Without doubt, I may have been mistaken in my notion of her. May I ask what you have to allege against my *pro-*



...ething out what Miladi has
..."'Except her coming into
all, which was an unjustifiable
Regnier.

..."'For that I am answera
have been wrong; but I wis
creature who has been cruelly
and I was far from thinking yo
by having her here. Neither
you would, but for the interfere
who would have done better to

..."'I beg your pardon,' answ
tily. 'The friend who warned
my daughters, was an English n
man—whom only an imperat
would have induced to interfere

..."'C'est autre chose,' said I. '
ment comes from such a high a
quarter it has more weight than

"'By no means,' answered Miladi, with more suavity than she had spoken yet; for she thought she'd silenced me with her English nobleman; 'by no means. It was Lord C——, who, happening to hear my daughters mention the name of the young woman in question, in reference to some accidental encounter with the Duc de Chartres, most kindly drew me aside, and warned me that, to his certain knowledge, she was a person of improper character!'

"'And he told you no more?' said I, with an air of innocent curiosity; 'he didn't tell you how he became acquainted with the fact?'

"'Nothing, of course,' said Miladi. 'It was not a subject for me to discuss with Lord C——. He pointed out the danger, which was all that was necessary.'

"'No doubt,' said I. 'The truth is, and I can't deny it, that the reputation of Miss Grieves is not intact; and I may have been wrong in introducing her here; but, perhaps, when you hear the circumstances of the case, you may view her with more indulgence.'

"'I have nothing to do with the circumstances!' said Miladi; 'the fact is enough for me; and I strongly recommend that the girl should be sent for

immediately, and after warning her to beware of the consequences of such another attempt to intrude into respectable society, be turned out of doors!'

'I beg your pardon,' said I. 'These ladies have the right to dismiss Miss Grieves, but not to insult her.'

'Insult a creature like that!' said Miladi, contemptuously.

'Et à quoi bon?' murmured Madame Bordelais, in a low voice.

During all this time, Sir Wallace (as Madame Harlin called him) had uttered never a word; he only twitched his neck when his wife said anything [illegible] harsh and despotic. But now he rose

"'Comment, Madame?' said Miladi, looking more *farouche* than before; 'vous osez—.' Here poor Sir Wallace twitched dreadfully, and pulling his wife's cloak, tried to get her away.

"'All I mean to say is, Miladi,' said I, 'that Miss Grieves' reputation might to this day have been as intact as your own daughter's, or that of any young lady under this roof, but for Lord C—— himself, who first enticed her, a girl of seventeen, from her father's roof, under a promise of marriage, and after bringing her here, abandoned her to starve, or go upon the *pavé* if she liked it better.'

"'I wish you had seen her when I said this,' said Madame Harlai. 'Her face turned all the colours of the rainbow, and I thought she was going into a fit.'

"'Are you quite certain of what you say, Madame?' said Sir Wallace, with some dignity and without any twitches.

"'Perfectly sure, Sir,' said I. 'My nephew attended this poor girl through a dangerous illness, occasioned by distress of mind when Lord C—— abandoned her, and that is the way I made her acquaintance.'

"From Madame Harlai's account, it was evident," continued Mrs. Aymer, "that Sir James was ex-

tremely shocked and surprized at this piece of intelligence; but the extraordinary effect it had upon her Ladyship we could not comprehend, till it ultimately appeared that Lord C—— was paying his addresses to her eldest daughter. 'And so,' said the old Frenchwoman, 'I had my revenge upon Miladi at last!'"

CHAPTER VII.

"SINCE I have known the world better than I did then," said Mrs. Aymer, "I see clearly that, however well meant, Madame Harlai had done an imprudent thing in selecting such a situation for me; because, however well I conducted myself, and I had certainly more motives than another would have had to do my duty, still, in order to serve me, she had run the risk of injuring the school. But I saw only one side of the case then, and I thought myself most cruelly treated. Hard it was, assuredly; but the world is always hard to women. It is said that adversity is profitable, but I cannot say I ever found it so. Being ill-treated makes me wicked, and the sense of injury I now felt, certainly didn't improve me. It is not in my

nature to be unhappy long together; I can't
have what the French call a *besoin d'être heur*
that will be satisfied; and as I was determi
never to expose myself again to such sufferi
as this affair had inflicted, I resolved to defy
world that rejected me, and if they wouldn't
me be happy one way, to find another; but
question was, what that other was to be.
the first place, I had to earn my bread. I
true, Madame Harlai, in the fulness of her b
volence offered me a home; but I would not h
accepted it for the world. It was not only t
much as I liked her, I should have found
life too dull and inactive, but I should have l
in hourly terror that her visitors might take

Madame Adelmar had died shortly before, and her husband was trying to keep on the business without her, for the sake of his son, whom you have seen. It was he that accompanied us to the theatre the other night.

"When I found how Monsieur Adelmar was situated, I saw that I could make myself useful and valuable to him in conducting the business; and it was not long before he discovered my merits, and was willing to reward them by making me his wife. But I not only did not care for him, but I had made up my mind never to place my happiness in the power of any man again. He gave me a good salary for managing his business, an occupation, by-the-bye, for which I found I had a peculiar genius, and I felt I was much better off as Miss Grieves, with no anxiety on my mind, than as Madame Adelmar, with the cares of a family on my shoulders, though he was a very good man, and I believe really liked me; indeed his subsequent conduct proved it."

"But you must have been so lonely!"

"Not at all. I lived in the world all day."

"But you had no connexions—no sister; no friend, but the old lady."

"I'm afraid I'm the sort of person that can do without; as long at least as I have occupation, and

[redacted] I am mixed up with the world. I tell you [redacted] already didn't improve me; it hardened me, [redacted] made me selfish. I cared for nothing but keeping [redacted] for a trouble, and being tolerably comfortable and well dressed. My situation required that I should be extremely well dressed, and that contributed very much to my happiness. I got a great many [redacted] speeches and letters from the fine gentlemen [redacted] came to the shop occasionally to buy gloves, and received several offers of marriage from the neighbouring tradesmen, so that I [redacted] didn't starve: but I was not to be moved [redacted] I resolved, whilst I acquired a reputation for the most extraordinary prudence and virtue, I [redacted] daily to bring myself in my security; especially when



next-door neighbour, who accepted him without hesitation. This was the first vexation I had experienced since I went to live with him, and it was no small one; for I knew the girl, and I was quite certain that the first thing she would do would be to dismiss me; and so I told Monsieur Adelmar; and, moreover, that I was so sure of this, that I should not wait to be turned off, but go at once.

"He was exceedingly sorry; but having convinced him I was right, he made a proposition which I fell into willingly. This was, that I should head a branch millinery establishment in London under the name of Adelmar; a fourth of the clear profits of which he assigned to me. So, in order to arrange this affair we went to England together, and there he took a lodging for me in St. James's Street, and I carried on business as Madame Adelmar and Co., from Paris. But it was some time before I got accustomed to my new situation, nor did I like it as well as my former one. It was less amusing, more laborious, and not so free from anxiety. In France I had had a fixed salary, and I never thought of money beyond it. Here everything depended on my own exertions and success. I might make a great deal; I might fail; injuring Adelmar, and leaving myself destitute to

begin the world again; and it was ten to one I I ever got so pleasant a situation as my first. Added to this, in my periodical visits to Paris to study the fashions and settle accounts, I found myself very unpleasantly situated with Adelmar's new wife, who was jealous of my influence with her husband, and suspicious of my integrity, or affected to be so. But though she worried his life out, and at length sent him to his grave, she never succeeded in shaking his confidence in me. He was quite right in thinking I would not wrong him of a penny. If I am anything in the world I am honest: but on the whole he thought better of me than I deserved, because he attributed to native prudence and excess of virtue, what was in fact the result of bitter experience and selfish caution. However, everything is to be judged by contrast, and although I was not so happy in St. James's Street as I had been in the Rue de la Paix, I was much happier than I am as Mrs. Aymer of Rus[illegible]

[illegible] happiest person I e[illegible]

"And who is your tormentor?"

"Why, Mr. Aymer, who in an evil day, I married. His wife used to deal with me; and every now and then, when she wanted to get some expensive article of dress, she would bring him with her to see how becoming it was; and it appeared afterwards, that in these visits my *beaux yeux* made a great impression on his heart. For my part, I was only intent on selling my goods, and never thought of the little man at all. But as ill-luck would have it, Mrs. Aymer met with an accident and died; and some time afterwards, to my inexpressible amazement, the widower waited on me, to what he called lay himself and his fortune at my feet."

"I confess I was so astonished that I didn't know what to say. I knew he was a West India merchant; that he lived in a handsome house, and kept a handsome carriage, and was reputed rich; but I knew nothing more about him. Neither can I say that I felt the least fancy for him. I would much rather have married poor Monsieur Adelmar, as far as liking went. But unfortunately my situation was just then rather precarious. I knew Adelmar could not live long, and I felt certain that when he died, the branch establishment would be broken up, and I should be thrown upon the



I should have had to become
where; and I had seen enough
situations are often very misera
I was now older, and had acquir
and doing as I pleased, that I f
brook authority. Then Mr. A
man than me, and as he profes
in love, I thought I should go
everything my own way, with
carriage, and plenty of money t
So I married him, and as the
repented it but once; and th
ceremony was performed that
deed, my repentance began l
givings all the while; but I
that I hated him till the da
for the wedding; but then
recede. I had given up my b
[illegible] I had in clothes an

anything like it! I assure you, if he ill-treated me, in the common sense of the word, I could bear it better. But the alternations of love and rage—love that I can't respond to, and rage about nothing, would drive a saint insane. Then I have no society; his friends and relations refusing to visit me because I was a milliner of doubtful character. You cannot imagine what a dreary thing it is to live in a fine house, and never hear the knock of a visitor, or to roll about London in a fine carriage without a soul to speak to. Often and often I have resolved to leave him, and fling myself upon the world to get my bread as I can; but it is so hard to begin life again. Besides, if he found me he could reclaim me. And then, I was such an idiot as to marry him without a settlement, so that I am entirely dependent on his caprice."

"But how is it he allows you to come here alone?"

"He does not allow me; but it's the only way I can bring him to reason, and punish him for his causeless jealousy. When he has behaved very ill, I take flight, and leave him to tear his hair by himself. Then he is so dreadfully afraid of losing me altogether that he knocks under."

"And doesn't he know where you are?"

"Sometime she finds out, and comes to fetch me back."

"I can't think how you dare do such a thing?" said Agnes.

"Why, what can he do but part with me; and if he did he must make me an allowance. I should be too glad if he would; but his own inclinations won't let him. If women were not weak, men would have much less power to ill-treat them than they have, depend upon it!"

"And where is that kind Madame Harlai now?" asked Agnes.

"Dead!" answered Mrs. Aymer. "She died in my arms, and in my lodging in St. James's Street.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was now Agnes's turn to fulfil her promise; and whatever interest Mrs. Aymer had taken in her before, was certainly doubled by the narrative. That the marriage was a fictitious one, she took for granted, and rather wondered how Agnes could ever have supposed it to be otherwise.

"But you should have employed a lawyer, and prosecuted him, or at least frightened him. You'd have got heavy damages, depend on it."

But Agnes disclaimed the idea; the indelicacy of it shocked her. It was a dreadful injury, but one to be borne in silence. Then, with regard to the child, Mrs. Aymer was at a loss what to think. The abduction was evidently not a common case of child-stealing, but a plot; and who could have

formed it, and what could be the motive? It occurred to her that it might be done at Lionel's instigation, in order to preclude the possibility of any future attempt to found a claim on the score of the marriage; and now that she was in possession of the facts, she promised her best assistance and advice. But on the following morning, whilst she was out, there came a ring at the bell; and presently in walked a little sallow man, with immense white bushy whiskers and a bald head, who said he was informed that Mrs. Aymer lodged there. Agnes bowed assent. He then inquired where she was, and when she would be at home; and seating himself, declared his intention of waiting for her. He seemed very nervous and irritable, and Agnes was wondering who he could be, somewhat apprehensive that he might be a discontented creditor, judging from the number of *objets* and fine things the lady bought, when he said:

"You don't know me, Ma'am, nor I you; but my name's Aymer."

He had traced his wife through the passport-office, and come to fetch her back.

Alarmed at the *scena* that she supposed would ensue, Agnes rose and retired to her bed-room, where she sat listening with anxiety for the return of Mrs. Aymer; the more especially as she heard the bus-

band's boots pacing the *salon* with what appeared to her an angry and impatient creak; when, at length, the bell rang, she opened her door with the intention of warning her friend of this inauspicious visitor; but he either foresaw her intention, or his love-sick impatience would not wait, for he was in the ante-room before her, and seizing his wife's hand, she heard him exclaim:

"Oh, Susy, Susy, how can you do so?"

Mrs. Aymer did not seem the least alarmed, but walked deliberately into the *salon*, where a conference of about a quarter of an hour ensued; at the end of which time she opened the door of communication, and requested Agnes to come and be introduced to her husband, who now looked radiant and triumphant. A walk was then proposed, and she being invited to accompany them, they went first to a banker's, where Mr. Aymer drew a pretty large sum of money; after which, they visited the various shops, where he paid for the articles she had had, and sometimes bought her more. On the whole, he appeared to Agnes to be the most generous and forgiving of men, though certainly most unprepossessing and unloveable; but Mrs. Aymer told her afterwards, that she had only seen him in his *tame fit*. "If you saw him in the other, you'd take him for a wild beast."

On the following morning, they departed, leaving a pressing invitation to Agnes to call in Russell Square, where they would be found, after their return from a short visit to Jamaica, whither he had promised to accompany him.

"As for your affairs, my dear," said the lady, "I am very sorry to leave you, for I think you are quite unfit to manage them yourself; and I don't think you'll ever get any news of your child, unless you obtain the aid of some more experienced person. Now, the St. Georges have evidently taken a great fancy to you, and I should think they would advise you as well as anybody in the world, if you tell them the circumstances of the case. And, by-the-bye, they'll recommend you a lodging, for this will be too expensive for you, now you're alone; and, mind, you may get into difficulties, if you go into a house of an inferior order, that you know nothing about."

Whatever Mrs. Aymer might be, either nature or circumstances seemed to have made her a strange mixture of good and evil. Agnes felt her loss severely; she was so cheerful and good-natured, so active, so fearless, and so full of life.

Previously to Mr. Aymer's unexpected arrival, the St. Georges had made an appointment with her to spend the morning at the Jardin des Plantes, and

consequently arrived in a coach before Agnes
well recovered the first feelings of depression
equent on her friend's departure; an event
of course took the visitors quite by surprise.
s told them, she knew nothing but that
Aymer had arrived to fetch her, saying he
l not wait, as business demanded his immediate
n to London.

And what are you going to do here alone?"

I must find another lodging less expensive than
, and Mrs. Aymer thought you might be kind
gh to recommend me one."

Willingly; but that is a thing not to be found
day. Lodgings in Paris are so often objectionable
young persons. Les belles surtout!" added
St. George; but Agnes not understanding him,
id him no harm.

I think," continued Mrs. St. George, "the only
for you will be to come and stay a few days
us, whilst we look about; and I'm sure Mr.
eorge will be delighted to have your company,
ell as myself."

n assurance which Mr. St. George corroborated
out hesitation.

gnes did hesitate, however, chiefly from diffi-
e. She feared to intrude, and was pervaded
a notion that she should be somewhat out of



them, and moreover the adva
considerable, if, as Mrs. Ay
St. George would aid her with
was induced to accept; and, in
of her, they waited whilst she p
and carried her away.

Had Agnes's mind been fre
would have found herself ver
here, for her hosts made her h
were willing to do everything t
her to remain; but some days
being able to effect the main
had accepted their invitation.
with Mr. St. George was not
and betwixt her own horror
and his engagements, nothing h

In the morning, they were v
made their appearance at all; t
and in the evenings there was al

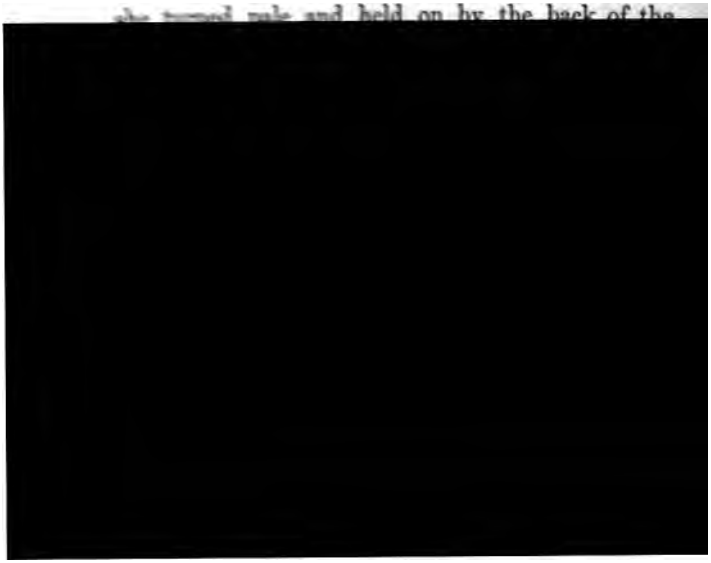
more than was agreeable, inasmuch, that if she had had a room to retire to, she would sometimes have done so to escape their civilities; but she had not; the rooms that were occupied by the company being, in fact, those in which the family slept. However, these attentions, though not welcome, were so far inoffensive, that they were always confined within the bounds of good-breeding.

It was evident that her host's visitors were really gentlemen of condition. The few ladies that came —for the company consisted chiefly of the other sex—were generally handsome or very musical, and might be best described, perhaps, by the word *stylish*. They never played, but remained in the music-room, as did Agnes; and the players came in and out and talked to them.

The gentlemen were always in full evening costume, but the ladies never *en toilette;* so that Agnes's plain dark silk and braided hair were not at all *inconvenable,* and as she was much the youngest of the lady visitors, so she was assuredly much the handsomest, and the one that attracted the most attention and admiration; to avoid which to the utmost she usually seated herself by the pianoforte, with her back to the company.

Signora Grazia was singing *"Ah! per te,"* and several people were standing about, listening to

[illegible] when the door that communicated with [illegible] opened, and somebody entered. Agnes saw Madame St. George nod and smile, and hold up her finger, as to an *habitué*, as [illegible] should say: "Not a word till the song's [illegible]" Whilst the visitor silently advanced and stood behind Agnes's chair. When the Signora [illegible] shut her large mouth, she pushed back [illegible] and rose, but so abruptly, that [illegible] of Agnes, who of course started up [illegible] out of her way; and as she did so, found [illegible] with Lionel Grosvenor! Agnes [illegible] the sort of woman that screams or faints; she turned pale and held on by the back of the



CHAPTER IX.

During the little ceremony of removing the music-stool and making way for the Signora, Lionel had time to consider the crisis and resolve on the line of conduct to be pursued, and the result of his brief meditations was, that he stepped forward and held out his hand as to an old acquaintance.

"How do you do? I did not expect to see you here! Are you making any stay in Paris?"

As there was nothing extraordinary in the recognition of two people from the same part of the world, no eye was upon Agnes's face when she moved her lips in the vain attempt to answer.

"Allow me to give you a chair," said he, drawing one forward and placing it so that her back was to the company, whilst he seated himself opposite. "Shall I bring you a glass of wine or water?" he added, hastening to fetch both from the *buffet*, on which slight refreshments were placed.

When he had seated himself again, he said in a low voice and with a *dégagé* sort of air: "And what brought you to Paris? Did you come here with the St. Georges?"

"No, Sir; I came alone. I cannot tell you here what I came for. I have written you several letters begging you to see me."

"I am really ashamed. The truth is, I was in the country when your letters came; and when I returned, I meant to call; but one thing or another came in the way; and then I lost the address."

"I wish very much to say a few words to you. It is only to ask one question—"

"Ask it now."

"I dare not; and yet suspense is so dreadful! Oh, if you would tell me the truth!"

"Can you doubt me?" said Lionel, expecting she was going to inquire into the validity of her marriage, or the constancy of his affections.

"Is it you that have taken my boy?" she whispered, gazing eagerly in his face.

"What boy?" asked Lionel, not comprehending her.

"My child; my little Willie!"

"What in the world should make you suppose I should take him?" said he.

"Who else could I suspect?" said Agnes. "Oh, for God's sake, Sir, give him back to me, if you have. It's the only thing I'll ever ask of you as long as I live!"

"We must talk further of this!" said he. "Are you staying here?"

"Yes, for a few days."

"You must come and see my country-house. I've got a charming little place at St. Cloud, and I'll drive you there to-morrow. I'll call for you at three o'clock," he said, rising. "I must go and speak to our hostess, now;" and he left her to pay his respects to Madame St. George.

Agnes would have given the world for a corner to retreat to, till she could somewhat recover her agitation. But, as I have said, there was no such thing to be had. On reception-nights every room of this small but elegant house was public, whilst all the bed-chamber appurtenances were

On the whole, her heart was lightened a
hopes awakened by the interview. Lionel l
denied that he had the child; and his
answers left room for suspicion that he knev
than he was immediately prepared to disclos

When the company had separated, Mada
George said: "Mr. Grosvenor is an o
quaintance of yours, I see."

"I knew him in England," answered Ag
a manner that did not encourage further i
for having no motive now for taking the St.
into her confidence, she resolved to spare
the pain of talking to them of what she wishe
to mention, and Madame knew the world
too well to ask inconvenient questions.

Agnes's heart beat high with hope as tl
appointed by Lionel approached; the mor

herself. And she pressed her hand upon her beating heart to keep it still when she anticipated the joy that awaited her.

Lionel was not remarkable for punctuality, and it was not far from four when his groom ran up stairs to say that the cabriolet was waiting.

It was a strange situation for Agnes, seated there beside the man she had believed to be her husband, and who had so infamously deceived and injured her; and most women would have felt it acutely; but for her part, she was so wholly engrossed with the one subject nearest her heart, that she could think of nothing else. For many reasons Lionel had never inspired her with a profound attachment; whatever sentiment she had entertained for him, had been long extinct; and with her joy in her child, the resentment had expired too; so that in fact, he had grown to be an object of perfect indifference.

"Do you know you've very much improved, Agnes," said he, as soon as they had cleared the bustle of the city. "Very much, both in beauty and *tournure*. But you should have a cashmere or a mantle for an open carriage. I must buy you a cashmere."

"I don't want one, I'm obliged to you, Sir," said Agnes, drily. "I want nothing in the



to attain your object with n
I should like to be troubled
call it."

"Is my boy at the place we'
"What makes you think he
"Because I think—I hope
to him. What else would be t
there?"

"Wouldn't you go, to oblige
"I'll do anything if you'll
child."

"But suppose I can't. Su
to give?"

"Oh! Sir, don't say that.
so cruel as to raise my hopes
had not got him."

"In what way have I raised y

"Perhaps it's because I want to have your opinion of my little *ménage de garçon*. When I want to fly from all the bore and annoyance of home and Lady Georgina, I take refuge there."

Agnes remembered how he hated Lady Georgina formerly, and supposed he intended to imply that he went out of the way to avoid her visits. But she made no remark on what he said. His likes or his dislikes, his goings and his comings, and Lady Georgina to boot, were matters of perfect indifference to her. If she could have believed she was only invited to accompany him to listen to this idle talk and to gratify his vanity and re-awakened passions, she would have leaped out of the carriage and left him on the high-road; and yet this was the whole and sole object of his invitation.

He had gone that night to the St. Georges, who kept a private *maison de jeu* of a higher class, not so much to play, but to see the beautiful English widow, of whom the *habitués* of the establishment were talking in raptures. Who she could be, they could not imagine; as modest as she was handsome, too; and evidently, from her retiring manners, of quite a different class to Madame St. George's usual visitors, who were generally women attached to the theatres or in some public line of life.

When he discovered that this admired beau was no other than his own ill-used wife, his morb vanity was infinitely gratified; and as he sat tall by to her in the corner of Madame St. George room, and looking into that lovely face, grown thousand times handsomer since she had suffer and loved, he felt, what he would himself ha called "horribly in love with her."

He hated Lady Georgina; he was weary to dea of Madame de Grandmenil, who had *affiché'd* possession of him, and Agnes had come in the ve nick of time to renovate his exhausted feeling It is true he had flung her letters into the wast paper basket with perfect indifference; but then had not seen her. When he did, he was amazed

almost expected to see her child playing in the little flower-garden in which it stood; for Lionel saw too well the power her delusion gave him to undeceive her. The cold indifference with which she listened to his levities and gallantries during the drive somewhat perplexed him; and the pertinacity with which she always recurred to the one subject nearest her heart, was beginning to confound his tactics. He had not the slightest affection for Lady Georgina's weakly, sickly boy; and he could not conceive Agnes's devotion to hers, especially, situated as she was—poor, obscure, and deserted—with no estate or title to descend on her offspring. But, however strange, it was no less certain, as he discovered, during the drive, that her lost child occupied much more of her thoughts than he did; and too shallow, and incapable of any profound feeling himself, to appreciate *her* feelings, or his own barbarity in trifling with them, he contrived, without encouraging, not altogether to annihilate, her fallacious expectations.

But there was no Willie in the garden, nor was he to be seen in the elegant little apartments to which she was introduced.

"Now, Agnes, come and sit down by me."

"It's useless to sit down, Sir. I came here in the hope of seeing my child; and I beseech you,

don't keep me in suspense. If he is here
[redacted]!"

"But you must first tell me what yo
my villa. It has been fitted up by Mo
best manner. Look at these tables!"

"I dare say they're very pretty, Sir;
understand such things."

"Why, Agnes, I remember there w
fuller of pretty things than you were
I'm sure you admired my cabinets at R
and they were not to be compared to thes

"Very likely, Sir; but I want my
answered, beginning to weep; "I care f
but my child: I came here to see him; s
not here, let me go: but don't keep

from reproaches only augmented her charms—partly, because it spared him pain, and partly, because it aroused his curiosity.

"I swear I love you better than any woman in the world, Agnes; won't you believe me?"

"No, Sir; and it would make no difference if I did. I hope it's not to listen to this, that you have brought me here."

"But why not listen to it, Agnes? Come here now, and sit down."

"I'll not sit down, Sir; and I'll not listen to what I ought not to hear. If you will not tell me where my child is, please to let me go!"

"Ought not to hear, Agnes! Why, you know you're mine, and can never be anybody else's!"

"I wonder, Mr. Grosvenor, you can like to recall what you ought to be ashamed of!" said Agnes, with indignation, and turning towards the door.

"You shall not go, Agnes!" he cried, seizing her by the arm. "Listen to me for one moment! I have behaved very ill to you, I confess it; and I cannot wonder at your resentment. But I am willing to repair it all. This house shall be yours. Nobody ever comes here but myself. Here you shall live with me, and enjoy every luxury you can desire. You know this is just what we had planned. It will only be here, instead of in Park Lane;



me go. You have no right
will go."

"You don't know what ri
right to detain you. You're
whether you like it or no. I
make you the happiest of wor

"You may make me mi
could never make me happ
restore me my child, and let

As Agnes was unwilling to
would attract the observation
might not have speedily succ
escape from these importunit
pected visitor come to her aid.

"Who the devil's that?
hearing a ring at the bell, a

quickly found herself outside the house, and on the high road to Paris, whither she made the best of her way on foot, till a chance conveyance overtook her, into which she stepped, rejoiced at having got away, but bitterly disappointed at the result of her expedition.

She reached the St. Georges without further adventure, and feeling that her longer residence there would be unpleasant, from the liability to meet Lionel, and beginning to fear also that even if he had the child, which she still suspected, he would not be easily induced to relinquish him, she debated whether it would not be better to return to England at once. A lingering hope that through Mr. Grosvenor she might yet recover her lost treasure, and the conviction, that even if he had not the child himself, without his aid she was never likely to discover who had, alone made her hesitate. The question was finally decided by a letter from Lionel, entreating her not to quit Paris without seeing him, as he had something of the greatest importance to communicate to her.

CHAPTER X.

"On revient toujours à ses premiers amours!"



/ else," returned Lionel. "But Agnes is the t *agaçant* little devil! She always was indeed; that was the way she got me to make such a of myself."

'She seems to understand her trade thoroughly," erved Watson. "She flies to be pursued, of rse."

"If it were any other woman in the world I ould say so; but, upon my soul, she confounds my maxims! If she's not an honest girl, she's e best actress I ever saw."

"A natural gift cultivated by observation and perience," answered the other. "Her residence London, and the sort of life she's been leading ust have furnished her with ample opportunities r self-improvement. You know, I told you I und her hanging about a second-rate London otel, pretending to get her living by shirt-making. don't know whether I'm not wearing at this oment one of the products of her industry," he ded with a sneer, looking at the wristband of his hirt.

"Pray have you any personal reason to believe hat she got her living by less creditable means?" sked Lionel, rather fiercely.

"Oh dear, no, by no means," returned Watson astily; "you cannot suppose that I, knowing all

which I have understood to l
trades going."

It is curious, but true, that
despised and neglected her, wa
twinges of jealousy on hearin
flung on his disowned wife;
believe them. He had an intu
they were false, an involunta
virtue; and he felt that he sho
to knock his dear cousin down.

This was not the first time,
he had been conscious of such
intimacy that had begun at colle
been sought by Watson for pu
had been accepted by Lionel b
tered by the attentions of a ma

tables, and never lose an opportunity of throwing in a card to help his own game.

During this early period of their acquaintance, Lionel had perhaps fancied he liked him; but for some time past he had been very certain that he did not. It was impossible he should, for he felt he was in his cousin's power; whilst his cousin evinced his own knowledge of the same unpleasant fact by his unscrupulous demands for money, on all sorts of pretences. In short, he was a constant drain upon one end of his purse; and as Lionel's own expenses kept the other always flowing, the consequent exhaustion was becoming not a little inconvenient and vexatious. However, it would not do to quarrel with a *friend* possessed of such a secret; and therefore a forced intimacy and familiarity was maintained betwixt them, which very well answered the purposes of Watson, of the depth of whose designs Lionel had no suspicion whatever; it never occurring to him that his cousin could entertain hopes of a succession so remote; for remote it appeared to him; not simply because he had a son, but also because, except whilst he was very ill indeed, the idea of his own death never presented itself to his mind.

But in spite of his dislike and distrust, he had not strength of mind even now to keep his secrets

"I must get the better of
stinacy of hers, somehow or ot
after all, I like her better tha
I wonder what has become of h

"Better for you that you s
plied the other. "It's to be
indeed he probably is."

"She does not seem to thi
"I'll write to her, and promi
recover him, if she will come
particulars of his abduction.
bring her."

Lewis Watson thought so
like it at all. A revival of t
Agnes and Lionel might frust
whether the child were recove
might have more children; a

prevent it; for well he knew, that with Lionel, the fancy of the moment was paramount, and must be gratified, be the consequences what they might. He endeavoured even now to deter him from a renewal of his connexion with Agnes, by suggesting the possibility, or rather, as he said, the extreme probability, of such a step leading to the disclosure of a secret so fatal to him, but so advantageous to her, that of course the slightest suspicion of the truth would urge her to the recovery of her rights, and those of her boy.

"And you are well aware," he said, "that there are always attorneys to be found who will undertake such a case, for the sake of the contingent advantage, if they succeed." But Lionel denied the danger. "If she ever intended to seek either justification or revenge, she would have done it before. Besides, she was not a woman to brave the publicity and exposure of such proceedings. She was too proud, and too modest."

The sneer on his cousin's countenance when he said this, did not escape him; and again he felt he should like to knock him down. It was not intended to escape him; Mr. Watson meant to look incredulous and amused. To a certain degree, he was so; for bad men do not believe in the real virtue and disinterestedness of women; and although

he was far from believing Agnes to be what he had insinuated, yet he never doubted, first, that she would return to live with Lionel, provided sufficiently favourable terms were offered her; and, secondly, that had she the most remote suspicion of her marriage being legitimate, she would make a vigorous effort to establish her claims.

On Lionel, however, these representations fell aimless; and when Mr. Watson mounted his horse, leaving his cousin in the act of inditing an epistle to Agnes, it was to ponder on some scheme whereby he might impede a reunion so fatal to his interests; and as he slowly wended his way to the city his brain was as busy inventing plots as a romance writer, nor were some of them a whit less extra-

against Agnes—it did not suit him to believe them; and what could he allege to her against Lionel worse than she knew? His infamous deception and cruel desertion! If she could overlook these, any other allegation he could make would be idle. What if he told—no, that would not do; but what if he *threatened* to tell Lady Georgina of the marriage, which rendered hers null and void, unless Lionel relinquished all intercourse with Agnes. This might be effectual; but it would infallibly lead to a quarrel, a thing he wished to avoid; but how if the quarrel resulted in a duel, and he had the luck to kill his cousin in fair fight? But unfortunately there were two words to that bargain—his cousin might kill *him*.

Suppose, too, he did succeed in deterring Lionel from renewing the connexion now, that would not prevent his doing it if Lady Georgina died; an event which, according to rumour, would surprise nobody, since she had been reputed to be in a dying way ever since she was born.

Then a transitory thought of Agnes in connexion with the muddy waters of the Seine, glanced through his mind; but a vision of the Morgue followed and chased it away. The best thing, after all, would be her forming another attachment—a

second marriage; why not? since she did not believe in the legality of her first! But how was that to be brought about? She had been deceived once, and would be wary.

With this question on his lips he passed under the Arc d'Etoile, and as he did so, his eyes fell upon a shabby-looking man in a faded suit of black, who, on observing him, touched his hat. Remembering the face, but not whose it was, Watson returned the salute and rode on; but when half way down the Avenue de Neuilly he met an acquaintance with whom he stopped to speak. Whilst yet in conversation, the man in black overtook them, and as he went by turned to look at the equestrians. That glance brought back his name; it was Leigh-

"I think I know your face?" said Mr. Watson; "I have certainly seen you somewhere."

"My name's Leighton, Sir."

"Leighton? Leighton?"

"I was Mr. Grosvenor's valet, Sir," said Leighton; immediately adding, "and I lost my place by a shameful accusation about being concerned in a thing I'd no more to do with than you had, Sir."

"Oh, ay, I recollect. It was at Ravenscliffe, I think?"

"Yes, Sir."

"There was a robbery, I believe?"

"No, Sir; there was no robbery. I think they were interrupted before they'd time to get hold of anything worth taking. I heard a noise below, for I slept in the same tower as master, overhead; and I came down stairs, and found Mr. Grosvenor lying on the floor of the dressing-room, in a faint; and if I hadn't come, there's no doubt, I believe, he would have bled to death."

"And you saw nobody?"

"Nobody, Sir. They'd plenty of time to get away, before I could get down. There was a young woman there that night, supping with master; and she got a sight of one of them, as he was making off."

"She didn't see his face though, I think?"

"No, Sir; unluckily, she was too frightened to stop."

"And you never had reason to suspect anybody? Nobody about the neighbourhood?"

"No, Sir; but my opinion always was, that it was somebody that knew the place, and that expected master was from home, as he was to have been at Sir Abraham Towers's, but for a letter that came that morning to put him off. So as they could find nobody else to accuse, they accused me."

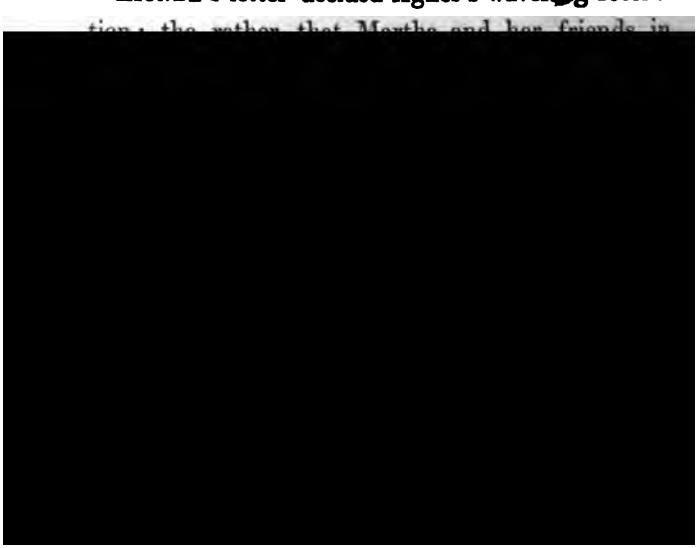
"And what has brought you to France?"

"Why, Sir, I can't get a place. It's not to be expected, when a man's been two years in prison; and I'm like to starve. So hearing Mr. Grosvenor

"I lodge at the Hôtel Windsor, Rue de Rivoli," he said. "Let me know where you're to be found; perhaps I may be able to get you some employment."

CHAPTER XI.

LIONEL's letter decided Agnes's wavering resolu-



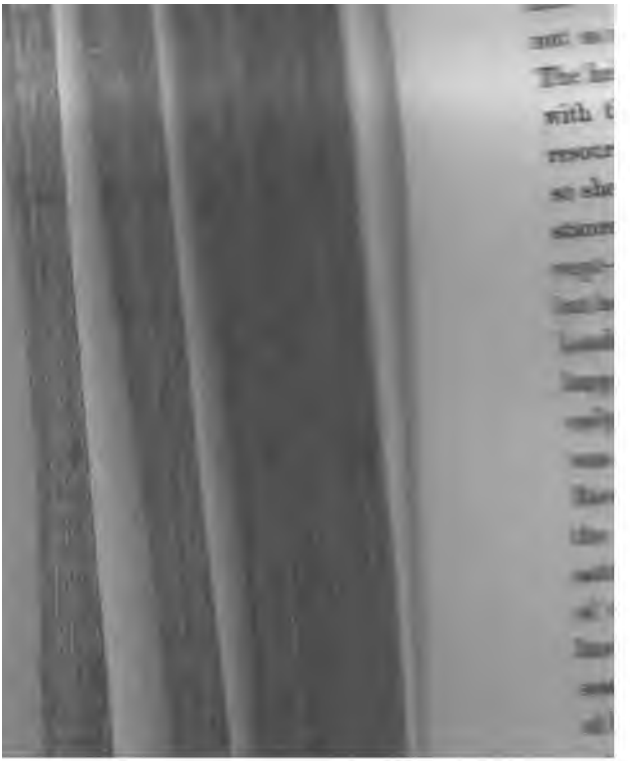
Agnes was so strongly of that opinion, that she determined to remove into a lodging at once, and there await the issue of Lionel's offer of assistance. One of Madame St. George's servants said that she knew of a *petit appartement au quatrième* to let, in the Rue Joubert, but she feared it would be *trop mesquin* for Madame. Barbara, the *concierge*, was a friend of hers, so Agnes went to see it.

It was not elegant, certainly; but her financial affairs were by no means flourishing, and she thought it prudent to be content with it.

The house, of which these rooms formed a part, was very large, formerly a grand hotel doubtless, with two staircases; one leading to the first, second and third floors, or flats, and the other to those above; and very different kinds of people they were that had, in the process of years, ascended one and the other.

Agnes entered on her new habitation forthwith; and having set up a small allowance of wood, a pound of candles, and a *quinquet*, with a little oil to burn in it, her *ménage* was completed: so easy a thing, to those who can suffer the barrenness of it, is life in France. But how uncomfortable!

Barbara assured her that the apartment was *charmant*, and that she would find herself *parfaitement bien* there; but Agnes felt quite depressed,



her, for his injury had been the source of her only happiness. The views of life it opened had cured her of the worst faults of her character; and how could she regret a deception that had given birth to her boy? but for whom, it appeared to her, that her existence would have been a blank far worse than all she was suffering for his loss. Besides, she might recover him, and be happy again; and having reached this point in her reflections, she roused herself, and sat down to answer Lionel's letter. The experience of her first visit to his villa disinclined her very much to a second; but after giving him all the particulars she had collected regarding the child's disappearance, she concluded by promising, that if he was restored to her by his means, she would return him her thanks in person.

The occupation this had furnished, and the hopes it awakened, having somewhat raised her spirits, she sat down to her needle-work, consisting of a piece of fine muslin embroidery, by means of which she hoped to recruit her purse. She would have very much liked a cup of tea, but she was unwilling to encounter the difficulties of procuring it till she was better acquainted with the localities; so she sat working and thinking, till she was suddenly surprized by finding that her lamp was going out; whereupon she started up to get hold

of a candle; but before she could untie the paper
were wrapped in and light one, the last dr
oil was exhausted, and she was in the dark
although Barbara had lighted a fire—wood-
like jealous lovers, requiring constant attenti
that had gone out also. What was to be d
She would willingly have gone to bed; but
was yet so unacquainted with the room, that
could not tell in the dark in what directio
seek for it, or for her trunk, which she had
even unpacked; so nothing remained but to
an expedition below in search of the *concierg*
his wife. A lamp swung by a pulley from
ceiling emitted a feeble light, by which
descended to the bottom of the stairs, but

sound of a man's voice. The voice continued, as if reading aloud, but there was no answer; so she pulled the bell. Then a chair creaked, as if suddenly pushed back on the tiled floor, a foot approached, and the door was thrown open.

"Que voulez-vous?" inquired the disturbed lodger.

"A light if you please — *lumière,*" answered Agnes, holding forth the candle she had brought with her.

"Come in," said the stranger, with a perfectly English accent, and she followed him into the inner chamber, the outer one being dark and divested of any sort of furniture.

Without looking at her, he began lifting the shade from his lamp, took her candle and lighted it. It was not till he was in the act of returning it that he lifted his eyes to her face. When they fell upon her features, he drew back the candle for a moment, with an expression of surprize in his countenance.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "I'm so absent. I think you are my countrywoman?"

"I am English," answered Agnes.

"I thought so," he replied, with a look that seemed to say, 'there are no such faces elsewhere.' "Are you living in this house?"

"Yes; on the floor below. I only came in this afternoon, and I should not have troubled you, but though I went to the bottom of the house for a light, I couldn't find either the porter or his wife."

"Ah!" said he, smiling, "you didn't know where to look for them. They were in their nest."

"And where's that?"

"Behind the wall, as you descend the last flight. A panel draws back, and discloses a space just large enough to hold a small bed and one chair. That is their home, their little halcyon nest, with which they are perfectly contented."

"I remember seeing the hole in the wall this afternoon, and wondering what it was for. Do they really live there?"

"That is their home, I assure you. Pierre and Barbara are excellent philosophers."

"They must be easily satisfied indeed. But how do they eat?"

"Their dinner is brought by the waiter next door, on a couple of plates. In winter, they sit upon the bed to eat it, their own laps their table. In summer, they eat it outside, in the court—*au frais*, as they call it—which they think *charmant*. Their breakfast, consisting of a slice of

bread and a mug of wine, they require neither table nor chair for that. I often smile as I pass this snug retreat, in which two virtuous human beings enjoy perfect happiness, to think of the struggles of mankind for space and property."

"She seems a simple creature," said Agnes.

"There's the secret of their happiness. They are both so. Not unintelligent either regarding the things they have to do with; but they have no artificial wants. A bed, a dinner, and a change of raiment, is all that appears to them necessary to carry on existence pleasantly; and then they love each other with a truly admirable devotion."

"Have they no children?"

"None. I fancied a child would embarrass the little *ménage*, and I asked Barbara if she could make room for one, if it came. 'Et pourquoi non, Monsieur?' was her answer. 'Mon Dieu!' she said, 'wouldn't I or Pierre always have it in our arms, *le petit amour*, except when it was asleep, and then where could it be better than in the bed?' But you are standing all this while; perhaps you'll do me the favour to take a chair," and he drew one fo-

"Not now," she said; "I left my room door open."

"Then you must allow me to see you safely down the stairs."

"Is there any danger?" she asked.

"Oh, no, no," he answered. "I am rather consulting my own pleasure than your safety. But I hope, since we are neighbours, we shall be neighbourly?"

"Do you live alone?"

"Quite alone."

"So do I."

When they reached her door, he placed the candle which, by the way, was all this while without candlestick, in her hand.

"If my lamp should go out to-morrow, may I come and ask you for a light?" he said, with a smile.

"Certainly," she answered.

"Don't be surprised if it does then," he said.

They then bade each other good-night, and he retreated up stairs, whilst Agnes re-entered her room with something stirring in her breast that she had never felt there before; the sum of which interpreted might perhaps have been, that she could

conceive anybody being perfectly happy in the hole in the wall inhabited by Pierre and Barbara, if they happened to have this young stranger for their companion.

Who and what could he be, with that pale thin cheek and lustrous eye? Whence had he that bright smile, so open, frank and free; and the voice so deep and yet so clear and musical? Poor he must be certainly; his lodging denoted that; though he seemed to be rich in books, for every chair and table was loaded with them—old, musty-looking books most of them. She saw also two large globes, and, lying about, several sheets of thick white paper covered with diagrams. She had heard of the colleges and the English students that attended the lectures; he was probably one of them.

He wore a blue-coloured dressing-gown and slippers, and a black handkerchief tied carelessly round his throat. But it was the ease and grace of his manner that puzzled her most—the way in which, without any effort, he had won her confidence and placed her at her ease. Agnes perfectly understood good manners when she met with them; from the quiet dignity of her character, and the aptness with which she imbibed and appropriated



and undisguised; he spoke o
freely: and without the slight
and foolish gallantry, he let her
he was agreeably impressed wi
her further acquaintance.

How fortunate she felt herself
a neighbour! How fortunate th
that lodging! How fortunate
gone out! But for that acciden
lived close to each other for the
never met.

The wisest people have their
and the most reserved their open
been originally reserved from her
sensitiveness, and latterly from
sciousness of her peculiar situatio
seemed to be all falling away befo
and earnest eye. She was sure h

to think with Barbara, that it really was *charmant*. Once or twice, she said, "How foolish it is to think so much of a person I had never set eyes on an hour ago." But still she did think of him; and not the less for telling herself it was foolish.

CHAPTER XII.

A FEW days after Agnes's removal to this gus-

"Certainly, Sir," said Leighton.

"Nothing but mischief can accrue from it, and it must be broken off at any cost."

Leighton did not know what was meant by *cost* in this instance; he wondered if it meant money; but he reiterated, "Certainly, Sir." He had not a shilling in his pocket, and did not know where to get one, and was therefore not in a position to dispute any man's axioms.

"Argument, reason, persuasion, have been tried in vain," continued Mr. Watson. "They have not the least effect—not the least in the world!"

"Indeed, Sir!" said Leighton.

"There is nothing left for it therefore—at least, nothing I can see—but to try other means. She has followed him here under the pretence of getting him to find this child of hers and she'll fasten herself on him like a leech if we cannot contrive to open his eyes."

If Leighton had been in a situation to utter the ejaculation that arose to his lips, it would have been not very friendly to his eyes. What cared he for his eyes, open or shut! The thing he wanted to know was, what Mr. Lewis Watson proposed to give him for meddling with them; and how soon the donation or

payment would be made; the voice of the inner man being at that moment extremely importunate for something to eat. But, unfortunately for Leighton, Mr. Watson was a slow rogue; not one that jumped rapidly to his ends, but a schemer that went round about to them, hedging himself in on every side from exposure or discovery, or even suspicion; one therefore who would not admit anybody into his confidence. He did not intend to put it in any man's power to betray his secrets, and he thought it necessary to deceive Leighton as to the motive of his present interference whilst he made him his tool; and Leighton, who was a small, slight, feeble-looking man, at the best, looked such

with the means of living. Not that he was by any means such a rogue as the gentleman that sat opposite to him. He would have continued honest if the world would have let him alone; if his bread had not been taken away by a false accusation—'*mais*,' he would have answered to an objector, '*il faut vivre!*' and accordingly he waited with impatience to learn what it was that was required of him—how he was to earn the means of obeying the above-named imperative necessity; and this was, in fact, all the interest he had in the matter—but Mr. Watson thought otherwise. Leighton had been cruelly injured by the accusation brought against him; nobody knew that better than Lewis himself; and he naturally supposed that the resentment would be in proportion to the wrong. But in this respect he was mistaken. Resentments are not to be measured by injuries; their intensity depends on the character of the sufferer—not on their religious principles either, but on their innate dispositions; and especially on the amount of self-esteeem they happen to possess. People may sometimes conquer their resentments from pious motives; but I confess, my observation does not lead me to the conclusion that the so-called religious are by any means less

resentful than others. The only difference I se
that they contrive to justify their resentment ei
by magnifying the injury, or by lending it ex
neous relations and fictitious importance. Leigh
did neither. He knew he had been gre
wronged, so were many other people; if not
the same way, in various other ways. He n
supposed the thing had been done out of malic
from any desire to injure him personally. He
it was a mistake—a most unlucky one—but it
not occur to him to throw the blame on anybod
particular; nor, although distress had driven hin
appeal to Mr. Grosvenor for help, was he gre
surprised at the ill success of his applications.

pathetic representations of the sufferings he was enduring for a crime he had not committed, procure some assistance.

"Now an idea strikes me," continued Mr. Watson, "arising out of your former acquaintance with this woman, that might answer our purpose. You saw a good deal of her, I suppose, when she was living at the castle in the capacity of lady's-maid?"

"I saw her a good deal, off and on," answered Leighton. "Of course she took her meals with us in the housekeeper's room; but at other times she kept herself very much to herself. The young ladies were fond of her, and she was a great deal up stairs with them."

"Still you were living under the same roof."

"No doubt, Sir!"

"And it would not have surprised anybody, I suppose, if you and she had taken a liking to each other."

"There's no telling but I might have felt something that way, Sir, if she hadn't been so proud; but she never treated any of the servants as her equals."

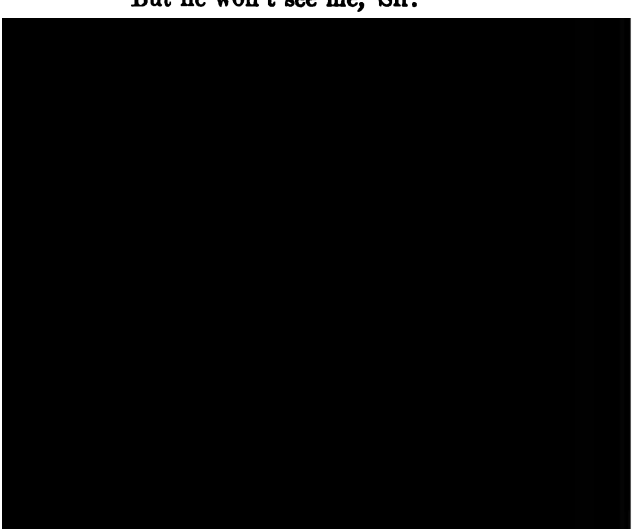
"No doubt, she had other views. But if we

could raise the slightest suspicion in Mr. Grosvenor's mind that you have been his rival, I think his pr would take the alarm, and our object would accomplished. What do you say?"

"I can't say, Sir, I'm sure."

"Why, there's no answering for anythin certainly. The best laid schemes sometimes fail we can but do our utmost to prevent mischief—t issue must depend on a higher power. However, come to the point, for I see it's later than I thoug and I've an appointment at two o'clock—to come the point, what I propose is, that you should Mr. Grosvenor."

"But he won't see me, Sir."



together, for example, I'm persuaded he'll throw her off at once."

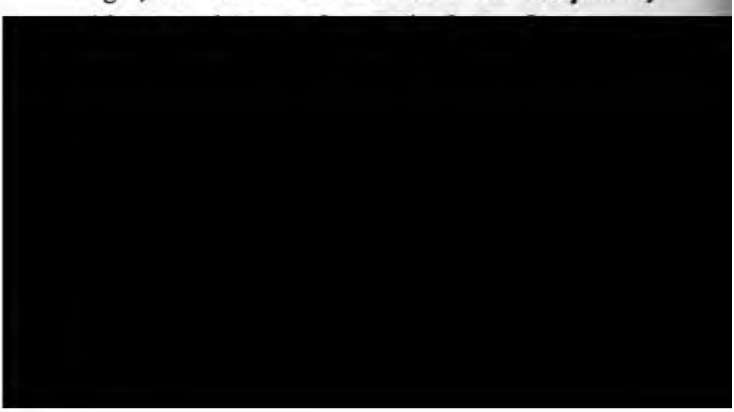
"I don't think he'd believe me, if I said so, Sir. He knows what sort of girl she was, and how she looked down upon the servants at the Castle. They said many a time that she was a great deal higher than the young ladies themselves."

"I dare say; but that sort of *hauteur* is often used as a cloak. However, it would not do for you to depend on your simple assertion, without anything to support it; but as I will instruct you, you will appear to be in her entire confidence. All I require of you is, to go to Mr. Grosvenor in the way I shall direct."

"Very well, Sir," answered Leighton, who desired nothing better; though with respect to the story he was to tell, he felt considerable misgivings; partly because he expected to be arraigned as a liar, and partly because, bearing no ill-will to Agnes, he had a certain repugnance to harm her, though how far what he was engaged to do *would* harm her he could not decide. It was a calumny, undoubtedly; but if it served to break off her connexion with a man who was the husband of another woman,

it might be rather a benefit than an injury; whilst, as regarded himself, having nothing to lose, any card was better than none.

At the same time, whilst he accepted the gratuity Mr. Watson placed in his hand, after giving him his instructions in what manner he should proceed, he registered in his heart no vow of fidelity to his employer. He would do what he was paid for, and if the thing came off easily, well and good; but if any particular urgency arose for avowing the truth, and giving up the name of his employer, he knew no reason why he should not do it; the rather that the more he saw of Mr. Watson, the more certainly he felt that the real motives that actuated him were such as he did not wish to disclose. Howbeit, be these motives what they might, he entered the field as a free companion,



zeal in his service. In short, he had miscalculated from want of acquaintance with the man he wa dealing with, to whom he attributed a desire fo vengeance, which did not exist.

CHAPTER XIII.

"HERE's a man, Sir, wishes to see you. He says he comes from a Miss Crawfurd," said Mr.



"Yes, Sir; he looks like a servant out of place."

"Let him come in."

And Leighton advanced into the room, with his hat in his hand.

"What brings you here?" said Mr. Lionel, with a frown.

"I came, Sir, to speak to you about a young woman you're acquainted with—Agnes Crawfurd, that was."

"What concern have you, Sir, with Miss Crawfurd? And what do you mean by coming here upon any pretence whatever?" said Lionel, angrily; for, with the same inconsistency he had exhibited in his conversation with Watson, he was as indignant that anybody should take liberties with Agnes's name, as if his own conduct had not exposed her to every possible degree of contumely.

"Why, Sir, I know Agnes is too proud to ask herself; but I thought, if you knew we were in distress, you might help us."

"What do mean, fellow, by *us?*"

"I and my wife, Sir."

"You and your wife! What the d—l are you talking about?"

"She didn't tell you we'd kept company, I suppose, Sir?"

"Kept company!"

"Yes, Sir; we were intimate ever since she lived at Ravenscliffe, as lady's-maid; and when she would come here to France, after little Bill, because she thought you'd taken him away under a mistake, I came too; as being her husband, I thought it my duty so to do."

"Who do you mean by little Bill?"

"Our little boy, Sir."

For a single moment, Lionel was taken aback; but Leighton made a poor villain; he was not well up to his part, and when he felt Mr. Grosvenor's eye upon him, his own fell before it.

"And pray, may I ask you what has put it into your head to come here with such a confounded lie in your mouth?" he coolly inquired. Leighton, was silent. "Is it a scheme to get money?"

"I'm very badly off, Sir; and, whatever you may think, I'd no more to do with that business at Ravenscliffe than —" and he stopped short for want of a comparison.

"Than who?" asked Lionel.

"Why, Sir, I was in no ways concerned in it, so help me, God! I heard a noise below, and I jumped out of bed, and ran down stairs;

whoever 'd done it, was away before I got
e."
ionel looked hard at him, and thought he was
ng the truth.
But if it was not you, who the d—l could
e?"
I've no idea, Sir. Did you ever ask Miss Craw-
l about it?"
No; but I will. Where is she? I want her
ress."
I don't know where she is, I'm sure, Sir."
That's a lie!"
It's not, indeed, Sir. The truth is, I've never
l Miss Crawfurd since that business, but once,
that was by accident, in the street. I didn't
w till yesterday she was here."
And how came you to know it now?"
A gentleman told me, Sir!"
A gentleman! what gentleman?"
Mr. Watson, Sir!"
Where did you see Mr. Watson?"
In the Champs Elysées, Sir; he knew me, and
ped his horse, to speak to me."
And he told you Miss Crawfurd was here, and
l that piece of information, you constructed this

pretty scheme to get money; and what do you think you deserve for your pains?"

"I called several times, and wrote several letters, Sir, and you wouldn't see me; and it's hard to suffer for a thing one had no hand in."

Lionel thought it was; and now, being face to face with the man, he was inclined to believe him innocent of the crime he had suffered for.

"The best way of proving your innocence would be to find out the guilty," he said.

"That's not easy for a man like me, Sir, when the lawyers couldn't do it."

"Very true; only they all agreed it was somebody well acquainted with the premises, and nobody knew who was in the habit of coming about the place so well as yourself."

"I'd be very glad to find out, I'm sure, Sir. I always thought it was somebody that knew you was going away that day to Towershill, and was disappointed at finding you at home."

"Well," said Lionel, drawing a piece of gold from his pocket, "don't come here with any more lies; and if you can find me Miss Crawfurd's address, I'll give you a napoleon for your pains."

He then handed him the one he held, and

Leighton, with a bow and thanks, retired; having made forty francs by the business and done nobody any harm. Indeed, he had done himself good, for the bungling business he had made of his attempt at rascality had actually aided his cause. Lionel thought justly enough that a real villain would have done it better.

"Just as I expected—he wouldn't believe a word of it!" answered Leighton, to Mr. Watson's inquiries as to how he had sped in his undertaking.

"Humph! He wouldn't?"

"No, Sir. He said he knew it was a confounded lie."

"Then I suppose he was very angry?"

"Not so much as you'd think, Sir; for when I saw he wouldn't believe me, I thought it better not to persevere in it; and he thought I'd been drove to it by distress."

"Then you didn't say anything about my sending you?" said Mr. Watson, putting his hand in his pocket.

"No, Sir. I thought it best not."

"Of course; for, however good one's intentions may be, no man's obliged to another for trying to save him against his will. Well, Leighton, we must let him take his own way," added Watson,

dismissing his unsuccessful emissary with another gratuity to requite his past, and ensure his future silence.

As Leighton walked away with sixty francs in his pocket, he felt himself a warm man; and resolved to refresh himself with a good dinner—at a certain *traiteur's* known to him in better days, when being in service, he had accompanied his different masters to Paris, and been placed on board-wages because they were living *en garçon* and had no establishment.

Mr. Watson felt less comfortable. His scheme was a signal failure, and he had exposed himself to a certain degree of risk without any gain. He was sorry he had had anything to do with Leighton

that she remained at home the whole of the day subsequent to that of their first meeting; but he did not come till the evening, when she had almost given him up, and was beginning to feel quite disappointed. When he did appear, she thought he had dressed himself for the occasion; for he looked like a man refreshed by a change of attire, less pallid and hollow-cheeked than the night before. He wore a brown surtout coat, and a black handkerchief round his throat; and if he did not look like a gentleman, as that term is understood, he looked like a man distinguished from others by his qualities or his acquirements. Nobody could have taken him for a common man. He entered with the same free and frank address with which he had received her on the previous evening; and whilst her heart beat and her hand shook, he appeared quite at his ease. Yet he was not indifferent either; for he said with an air of perfect sincerity, that he had been looking forward to this, meaning the visit, all day; but that he had not been able to come till now.

Agnes wondered what his occupation was; but she did not dare ask questions, for fear of provoking any which she could not answer honestly; and to deceive him by passing for what she was not, was a

[redacted] This difficulty had not [redacted] all his communication seemed to [redacted] and then the recollection of it, [redacted] and embarrassed. And this was the [redacted] because he seemed to have no con-[redacted]

"I [redacted] a good many lectures," he continued, [redacted] made no inquiries; "and there was [redacted] in the Observatory this evening, which [redacted] and [redacted]."

[redacted] of all the books and diagrams she [redacted] about his room, and judged he was [redacted] learned man she feared; and her diffi-[redacted] was augmented by an immediate sense of her

In this strain the conversation ran, or rather lagged, for some time, he trying to draw her out and give animation to it, whilst she continued oppressed with a sense of inferiority, and a consciousness of her false position that sat like lead upon her spirits. She had felt nothing of the sort the night before, for then her whole thoughts and attention had been concentrated upon him; but now she could not divest her mind of anxiety regarding the impression she was to make herself, and hence all this embarrassment, and the more sure she was that the impression must be unfavourable the greater was her constraint. And doubtless, had that been their first interview, her apprehensions might have been well founded; but the cheerful facility with which she had accepted his civilities on the first occasion, had ensured her against the immediate condemnation she feared; and instead of thinking her a stupid prude, he concluded that some accidental circumstance, or some feeling he had not the key to, was the cause of her ungenial manner, and that to give her time to recover herself and restore her confidence, the best thing he could do was to resume his first subject, and speak of himself. So, from talking of Paris and its people, he con-

trived to slide into his own personal affairs and motives for being there.

"Perhaps there is no place in the world," he said, "so constantly diverting as this. I am not merely alluding to the public amusements, but to the hourly spectacles, the streets and Boulevards, and cafés themselves present to an observer. But to enjoy them you must be a man that can go anywhere; not a fine gentleman either, nor so well dressed as to excite observation, or incur danger. You have no idea what strange sights and scenes I often witness."

"Do you?" said Agnes, raising her eyes to his face.



place like Paris. There is none where one can so well dispense with society. He may trust to his eyes and ears to furnish his amusements, if he has only learnt to use them."

"I have seen very little of Paris," she said. "A friend I had here took me about at first; but now she's gone I'm quite alone, and I don't much like going out."

"Alone! and in a lodging in this strange city; so young and so beautiful!" for Agnes, though a mother, was not yet two-and-twenty; and from the delicacy of her features and complexion, scarcely looked so much. "Married, too! Where could her husband be?" for he not only observed the wedding-ring on her finger, but he had on that morning inquired of Barbara the name of the lady, *au quatrième*."

"Ah!" answered the little *concierge*, "c'est jolie ça, n'est-ce pas? As for her name," she added, "I have it here on a bit of paper, in case the postman should bring her any letters—Madame, Madame Gibson—c'est ça!"

"And is her husband with her?"

"Non, personne—nobody."

"And what does she do?"

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"I h
said, "
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to lay by a trifle for the future; and naturally enough, he brought me up as his successor; but unfortunately, as it then appeared, I was born with tastes so exceedingly adverse to my father's views, that I was not only extremely dissatisfied with my employment, but I was worse than useless in the office; making all manner of mistakes, because instead of minding what I was about, I was furtively reading some book or other that I kept hid under my desk; so that my poor father and I could never agree. His friends advised him to flog me; and I must do him the justice to say he was not neglectful of their counsel; but innate propensities are not easily overcome, except from motives of interest, and I was too young to be moved by them."

"But how did you get the books?" asked Agnes. "I suppose your father would not give them to you?"

"Why there was a poor learned man in the town, that had been a teacher, till he grew too deaf for his function. He was what the Scotch call 'a dungeon of learning;' and so fond of communicating it, that the loss of his occupation pained him much more than the pecuniary one it entailed. We made acquaintance at a book-stall that we both

[illegible]: and whenever he found I was eager to acquire knowledge, he soon showed me that he was as eager to impart it. There was a dreadful struggle at home about the time I *wasted* in his company, but I was not to be overcome; and at last my father and I came to a compromise, and it was agreed that I should have the command of my time after five o'clock, provided I attended to business the rest of the day. After this we went better: and from the hour of my liberation morning, and often later, I used to listen to the teachings of my old philosopher. But as appetite grew with what it fed on, the more I was in his company, the more distasteful I found the employment to which I was condemned the remainder of the time. However, I adhered to the agreement till I was old enough to be accepted as an instructor myself; and then I relinquished business altogether, and through the recommendation of my philosopher, I obtained an engagement as classical teacher in an academy. But instead



as it had been my own choice; and, besides, I had no other means of living, without going back to the office, which was out of the question. So I toiled on despondingly till my father died; and then, to my surprise, I found that by turning everything he had left into money, I could realize enough to provide me with absolute necessaries, and a few books into the bargain; and as the sort of life I contemplated is more agreeably carried on in Paris than in London, I came here."

"And here you are happy?"

"Perfectly. I am always busy; and busy in the way I like. Sometimes I submit to a little drudgery with my pen, to enable me to buy books, but the end reconciles me to the means, and I flatter myself I am an improving example of how little a man can be happy on."

CHAPTER XIV.

In consequence of the *esclandre* at Chantilly, it was considered absolutely necessary for the credit

have done it, were so far carried away by their indignation at Colonel Aitchison's conduct, as to second those members of the family who acted from more worldly motives. Whilst the latter cried, "Marry directly, to save yourself from the ridicule of a hopeless passion," the others cried, "marry, and let him see you are not going to break your heart for him."

Isabel submitted to the arrangement, but not from fear of the world's ridicule; she cared nothing about it—not to persuade Colonel Aitchison of her indifference; she would have preferred that he should know her sufferings, and how deeply she had loved him. That was the only revenge she desired. She thought, if not now, the time might come that he would regret her; and that when he heard of her early death—a consummation she both wished and expected — his heart might melt and his eye drop a tear for the anguish he had caused, and the love he had lost. No, she submitted because she had neither bodily nor mental energy to resist the influences that pressed upon her; and because the future that lay before her would be so short, and, take what form it would, so hopeless and wretched, that it was not worth an exertion to attempt to shape it one way

or another; so the *trousseau* was prepared, s
the Ambassador's chaplain was spoken to, s
the cards were issued for the *déjeûner* which
to be given on the day that was to make Isa
Grosvenor the wife of Sir Abraham Towers.

But although the young girl's moral nature
so far subdued that she submitted to the arra
ments made for her, her physical nature t
the affair in a different temper; and, accordin
before the day arrived on which the wedding
to take place, she was extremely ill. The sh
she had received at Chantilly, and the for
suppression of her sufferings since, formed a
gether an accumulation of mental mischief t

he day appointed, he said, was too early. Lady Grosvenor must allow the young lady a little more time to recruit before her marriage.

No doubt this haste was very inhumane; but parents are often extremely inhuman, as we know, or might know, if we looked fairly at the struggles and disagreements that arise betwixt them and their children; and I do not allude here to those whom the world calls bad and unnatural, but to those who are supposed to do their duty by their offspring.

The second edition of cards being destroyed, a third was prepared and issued as soon as Isabel's convalescence was sufficiently advanced to warrant the hope that she would be quite well; and this was also done without consulting her; Lady Grosvenor, who took the management of the whole affair, shrinking from entering into any discussion with her daughter on a subject so unsafe. Her conscience told her that Isabel had been unfairly hurried into the engagement, and she feared that the respite she had had might have given her not only time for reflection, but fortitude to retract; and her apprehensions were not ill-founded. A good sharp fit of sickness will often do more to cure a hopeless passion, or blunt the sting of a dis-

appointment, than months of sadness and repining in all the luxury of woe. The delicious sensations of returning health make us feel that life is not such an insupportable burthen as, in the extremity of our despair, we had fancied; even though we are compelled to sustain it without the supporting arm we had fondly relied on.

As Isabel Grosvenor reclined on the sofa in her own bedchamber, her mind began gradually to open to the conviction that Colonel Aitchison was a selfish, hard-hearted egotist, and that he had treated her cruelly: for well she knew that he had been under no mistake, but was perfectly aware that she loved him, and had been ready to say yes any day or

hated? And she wondered how she could have been so stupified by her grief, as to accede to the engagement for a single minute. How fortunate her illness had been. But for the reprieve it afforded her, she would have been irretrievably the wife of Sir Abraham Towers, and doomed to wretchedness for life; but now, although a struggle might await her at home and the world's ridicule abroad, she was determined the first time the subject was introduced to declare her resolution never to marry him. But it was a painful subject, and she was content to postpone it till forced on her; the rather, that her meditated rebellion was something so new that she distrusted her capacity for conducting it well. Moreover, vague hopes arose, that as nothing was said, nothing would be done; perhaps her mother, seeing her sufferings, had relented; perhaps Sir Abraham, attributing her illness to the right cause, was disgusted. Pleasing, but unfounded hypothesis! Lady Grosvenor was as inexorable, and Sir Abraham as ardent, as ever, although it was an ardour that for the moment was exhibited only on paper—he having been obliged to visit England on pressing business which had been postponed till after the wedding, when he had hoped to travel thither with his bride.

On the pretence that they might be too agitating the tender messages entrusted to the mother i these missives were not delivered to the daughter and it was not till the near approach of the da fixed for the marriage, that Lady Grosvenor per mitted the subject to be named.

Isabel was now pretty well; Sir Abraham was c the point of returning; the invitations were issue the confectionary bespoke, the chaplain warne and society attentive.

It may be judged, therefore, how the intend bride's protest was received! Lady Grosvenor con templated her with horror and amazement. Was girl infatuated? Was she mad? Was she resol

support: it would kill her. Sir Francis had been threatened with gout for some time. This shock would assuredly send it into his stomach. They must instantly fly from Paris, however unfit she and Sir Francis were to encounter the fatigues of the journey, and hide their disgrace at Ravenscliffe. Finally, Lady Grosvenor called for her salts and her maid, who, with a countenance of the deepest concern, assisted her Ladyship out of the room, and led her to her own chamber; leaving Isabel choked with tears and sobs, and intimately persuaded that she was herself a monster of folly and ingratitude; and that, be her own sufferings what they might, it was her evident duty, for the sake of her afflicted parents, to marry Sir Abraham Towers; an opinion so congenial to the general convenience of those about her, that she found herself universally supported in it.

CHAPTER XV.

It was with feelings of intense wretchedness that Isabel communicated her resolution to he mother, who, instead of accepting her acquiescence as an heroic sacrifice to the will of her parents —and heroic it was in the intention, however mistaken—simply rejoiced that her daughter had come to her senses before Sir Abraham arrived; an event which was not expected to take place till the day

ment. For her part, although, instead of sleeping, she passed the night in tears; and although she continued so pale and thin, that the milliner recommended rose-coloured linings for her bonnets, and her maid was obliged to take in all her dresses, she exhibited no opposition, nor made any display of feeling. She appeared quiet and resigned; and as those about her looked no deeper than the surface, they had no suspicion of the struggle that was going on within. They never guessed, that, hopeless of any other escape, she was meditating how to elude the destiny she abhorred by death. But how to die? For death she wished ardently; but she dreaded the pain and horror of dying, and did not know how to compass her will. Poison seemed the only means she could command courage to use, and the only poison she knew of was laudanum; but what quantity should she take, and how procure it? She stole into her mother's dressing-room, and examined all the phials, of which there were not a few, but there were none containing laudanum amongst them; and even in Georgina's apartments she was not more successful. To ask any of the servants to purchase such a drug for her was out of the question.

She knew that the fumes of charcoal furnished an

easy mode of eluding unpleasant engagements; but where was she to get it? Besides, she had no stove.

Young ladies of the higher classes are brought up in such a state of dependance on those around them, that they are rarely very rich in expedients or resources, and even suicide becomes rather an embarrassing operation to a timid, inexperienced girl, who would gladly die if she could but be translated or attain a painless death.

Thus perplexed and bewildered, frightened and wretched, "letting I dare not wait upon I would," she allowed the days to creep on till the one arrived on which Sir Abraham was expected. A large party was invited to dinner, and he was to be among the first them; and on the following morning she was to be married. Everything was in a forward state of preparation; her very trunks packed and strapped, and standing in the ante-room, ready for removal; for Lady Grosvenor was impelled, by a nervous impatience to see the thing over, that made her

but of all the days in the year this seemed the least likely for her purpose. The most courageous and determined self-slayer that ever sought death, could scarcely have found leisure or opportunity of getting out of the world, with so many busy servants and congratulating friends about her; all the intimate ones, especially the young ladies, stepping in just for a moment, to see the *corbeille*, or to say good-bye. And curiosity gave Isabel more intimate friends on this occasion than she had ever suspected herself possessed of; for, as it is a well-known fact, that people who make sacrifices to deceive the world, very rarely succeed in their object, so all Lady Grosvenor's scheming to save what she considered her daughter's credit, was not of the least avail. Nobody forgot the scene at Chantilly. Everybody believed that Isabel was marrying Sir Abraham, if not altogether at the instigation of her family, yet out of pique rather than inclination; and in most instances, the animated congratulations were succeeded by exclamations of pity the moment the visitors found themselves safe in their own carriages; a pity that was not always genuine either, for Sir Abraham was very rich, and the *corbeille* was superb.

But, in spite of all this bustle and excitement,

the victim herself became every moment mo
anxious. The scene around her gave a reali
and a presence to that which, owing to the brid
groom's absence, had hitherto appeared indefinite
distant—more like an ugly dream than a ste
reality. Her cheeks were flushed with agitatio
and her whole deportment was so unquiet and co
fused, that she was like a person in an incipie
stage of brain fever. These hectic roses in h
cheeks, however, were very becoming; and wh
she was dressed for dinner, every one exclaim
how well she looked. It was quite true that th
had not seen her look so well for many a day,
despair was at her heart, engendering and sugge

ham was expected to make his appearance before the rest of the company, she told her daughter, that as there were some matters of business to be discussed, she must remain in her chamber till she was summoned, which, of course, was not done till there was no farther danger of a *tête-à-tête*.

Sir Abraham Towers was a tall, stout young man, with full cheeks, and sandy hair, who spoke very slowly, and as if he had plums in his mouth, a thorough country gentleman. Good-natured from indolence, but stupid and thick-headed; and with very obscure notions regarding the character and feelings of women. He knew that he was considered an excellent match, and that innumerable young females, as he called them, would have been overjoyed to find themselves the mistresses of Tower Hill; whilst one of his reasons for marrying, as he himself alleged, was to escape the plague of scheming mothers. He knew nothing whatever of that class of 'young females,' to which Isabel Grosvenor belonged; and in spite of the coldness and reserve and depression she had uniformly exhibited in their interviews, he never suspected that she was marrying him against her will. He only supposed her to be more shy and retiring than young women in general; and as his position had

exposed him to too much of the opposite qualities, he liked her the better for it. Neither was [redacted] ignorant of what everybody knew, or, at least, strongly suspected; namely, that there had been some "love passages" betwixt his intended bride and Colonel Aitchison; but he did not look for virgin heart, nor perhaps for any heart at all. Colonel Aitchison was a good match, he had the satisfaction of feeling that Sir Abraham Towers was a better; and since he knew of no reason whatever for any regret on the part of the lady, he looked for none. The whole affair had been transacted with the mother; and even the daughter's consent conveyed through her lips. Sir Francis was old and fast failing, both in mind and body, and [redacted] everything to his wife. Lionel cared for nothing [redacted] and intrigues; L[redacted]

husbands, to be fast becoming the most neglectful. He mixed little in the gay society that engrossed the rest of the party; and although he spent the greatest part of his day from home, he gave little account of the pursuits or amusements that occupied his time.

On this day, however, the eve of the wedding, every member of the family was present. How rich in friends the bride appeared! How enviable her position! How brilliant the destiny that awaited her! None knew the pangs of her aching heart, nor felt the throbbing of her burning brain, nor guessed the unutterable loathing with which she submitted to the attentions of the bridegroom who sat beside her. Yet she smiled when it was expected of her—indeed, oftener! and exhibited most flattering acquiescence in all his opinions, for her mind was too much engrossed to follow his discourse, and she assented without knowing what he said. When the dinner was over, and the ladies were for a few minutes alone, she was surrounded by the young asking questions and the old giving advice, till the gentlemen appeared, and then everybody made way for Sir Abraham, who seated himself beside her.

"This time to-morrow," he said, drawing out

his watch, "we shall be at the end of our da journey, I hope. I don't know what sort of hotel this Lion d'Or is that we're to stop at, you?"

"No," answered Isabel, turning away from with a shudder.

"My courier recommends it strongly, and left him to arrange everything for us. Are sorry to leave Paris?"

"No; yes. I don't know."

"I'm tired of it. I'm never happy anyw long but at Tower Hill. I miss my own an ments. I hope you'll like Tower Hill."

"I shall never see it!" thought she.

"I have had your apartments fitted up by D

all object to London for a few weeks in the
g if you wish it. Are you fond of London?"
No."
'm glad of it. No more am I, to say the
. I see we agree in our tastes, and that we
be very happy together. A conformity of
is everything in married life. Then people
differ. I confess I shouldn't like a wife that
always differing, like some people;" and as
nade this observation he cast a glance at
sa, who was just launching into an animated
ite with her husband with regard to the age
e of the French princes. "I'm sure you're not
of argument, are you?"
No."
I'm very glad of it. For my part, I hate
I like people that agree with me. I make it
le not to invite people to Tower Hill that hold
ite views in politics or religion, or that sort
hing? What's the use of it? Let every
keep his own opinion if he likes, and let
keep mine. That's what I say. Don't you
k I'm right?"
Quite!"
I don't like any of these new-fangled notions
my part; and I think it's the duty of every

man of any standing in the country to suppre
them. I always tell everybody that what was go
enough for my forefathers is good enough for m
and that if they want to turn things upside dow
they've come to the wrong person. What do yo
think of this new project of sending us flying ov
the country by steam?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"It won't do, depend on it! The landed pro
prietors will never allow it. They actually pro
posed to carry a line right through my park.
saw the plan with my own eyes! What woul
my property be worth in Ellerton if they tur
all the traffic from the town, I wonder? It wou

ill now!" said Isabel; "and if you don't like bad health you had better not think any more of me."

"But you've only had a fever," he said. "Anybody may have a fever. I had a bilious fever myself once, and I've very good health. A fever's nothing."

"To some people, perhaps, but it ruins the health of others; and the truth is, Sir Abraham, I know I'm not fit to be married, and I don't wish it. Late as it is, it's better to speak the truth now. You'll be much happier without me, and I entreat you to break it off!" This was spoken in a low hurried tone, her breath almost failing her with agitation and the palpitation of her heart.

"This is too severe!" he said, supposing she had taken offence at his remarks about sickly wives. "I never thought of your being ill, I assure you. I was thinking only of Lady Georgina. Who could think of your being ailing? I'm sure I never dreamt of such a thing, and I hope you'll dismiss it from your mind. I should be the most miserable man in the world if I have given you any offence!"

"I'm not offended," she answered, "but I have

been wishing to speak to you, and now that I ha[redacted] an opportunity, I conjure you to believe what I sa[redacted] Indeed, Sir Abraham—"

"Bel, Lady Jane Mortimer is going away, a[redacted] would like to shake hands with you," said La[redacted] Grosvenor: her eye had been for sometime on he[redacted] daughter, the expression of whose features alarme[redacted] her. Isabel was pleading for life; her bosom wa[redacted] heaving, her cheeks were crimson, her eyes suffuse[redacted] with tears. In her deep earnestness, her eage[redacted] anxiety, she was beginning to forget the place sh[redacted] was in and the observers that surrounded her[redacted] Unconsciously her voice was becoming louder too and other eyes and ears besides her mother's wer[redacted]

"I wish she had been here!" exclaimed Isabel, energetically.

"So does she, I assure you! However, you'll see her on your way. You go by Dieppe, I believe?"

"I don't know!" answered Isabel.

"I'll tell you what, my dear, I think it is high time you went somewhere; for, whatever they may say, you don't look well at all, in my opinion, with those bare bones and flushed cheeks of yours. Why, child, you're quite a skeleton, I declare, now I get a near view of you."

"I have been very ill," said Isabel.

"So I heard, and I don't think you're very well, now. However, your good native air will set you right, I hope. They say Tower Hill is a fine place, and being so near Ravenscliffe, it will be very pleasant for you. But there's your inamorato looking quite forlorn without you, you must go and console him, though for my part, I think you should go to bed. My gracious, child! you're quite in a fever!—your hand's like fire. Come here!" she said, beckoning to Lady Grosvenor. "Do send this poor child to bed. If you don't, I suspect you'll have no wedding to-morrow. Just feel her hand!"



"You had better go to bed, Bel!" said Lady Grosvenor. "It's merely the excitement. Just slip out of the room, and I'll excuse you to Sir Abraham." And so failed the bride's project of appealing to the bridegroom's generosity.

"Thank God, she's gone, foolish girl!" thought her mother, as she cordially bade good night to Lady Jane. "When once she's married, she'll get rid of this nonsense, and behave like other people."



CHAPTER XVI.

THE servants at the Hôtel de Breteuil, betwixt clearing away the disorders of one feast and completing the preparations for another, had been up nearly all night—some of them, indeed, had actually not been to bed at all, when the morning dawned that was to see Isabel Grosvenor converted into Lady Towers. As it was intended that the marriage should take place at eleven, and the *déjeúner* at twelve, in order that the bride and bridegroom might start in time to complete without inconvenience their appointed journey, even the heads of the family made a violent exertion to rouse themselves betimes, with the exception of Sir Francis, whose extreme debility and fast failing intellect

required indulgence. Bontems, his valet, then had her Ladyship's orders not to take up master's chocolate till ten; but the stimulus of impending event seemed to have roused his mei and feelings into such an unusual state of acti that he rang his bell at nine o'clock for the pur of sending his servant to request that Miss L would come to him immediately, as he wishe see her before he rose. The time had arri however, in which Sir Francis's commands wer longer the law of the house; and on receiving message, instead of forthwith proceeding wit to her young lady's chamber, Ma'm'selle Va knocked at Lady Grosvenor's door to inquire if

slept—through her whole courtship, dreaming of Elysian fields and loving hearths, to open her astonished eyes thereafter in a fearful wakening.

Isabel not answering the summons, Bontems was instructed to say she was dressing, and would wait upon Sir Francis presently; whereupon the old gentleman, with the impatience and irritability that accompanies certain maladies of declining life, insisted on rising immediately in order that he might be ready to receive her. But when his toilet was nearly completed, as she had still not made her appearance, he asked for his dressing-gown, and leaning on Bontems' arm, proceeded to her room, holding in his hand a morocco case containing a superb set of jewels, the wedding gift, which he was impatient to present to her.

It was now nearly ten o'clock, and Ma'm'selle Valerie was just proceeding in the same direction with a cup of coffee and a slice of dry toast on a silver salver.

"Sir Francis wishes to see Miss Grosvenor," said Bontems.

"Tout à l'heure!" answered the *soubrette* with an air of authority, as she advanced to the door. "Mais où donc est la clef?" she added, surprised to perceive it was not in the lock, as usual.

"C'est dedans probablement," said Bo
"Il faut frapper."

"Eloignez vous donc!" said Valerie, s
tapped at the door; but no one answered.

"Ma'm'selle dort, sans doute," said Bonte

"Mais c'est singulier," observed the w
maid, knocking again.

"What is it? What's the matter?
doesn't she open the door?" inquired Sir Fra

"The key's inside," answered Bontems;
Mademoiselle's asleep."

"Wake her! wake her!" cried Sir F
striking the door with his stick.

But still there was no answer. They k

side the Barrier. He had just come in, and was on his way to his own room to dress, when hearing the knocking he turned to inquire the cause of it, which he no sooner learnt, than his cheeks and lips turned of an ashy paleness. Perhaps he thought of Juliet and her bridal day.

"Break open the door!" he said, advancing towards it. "Send for a locksmith, instantly!"

"What's the matter? Why don't they open the door?" reiterated Sir Francis.

"Come away, Sir; allow me to lead you to your room," said Mr. Damer.

"No such thing, Sir!" replied the old man, fretfully. "I want to see my daughter."

"I am afraid Isabel may not be well, Sir," answered Mr. Damer. "You had better return to your own room, and I'll let you know when she's ready to see you."

"Ready! Why isn't she ready?" exclaimed Sir Francis. "I want to see her. I have got something for her."

"Get him away!" whispered Mr. Damer to Bontems; but the old man had a strong will of his own when he was roused to exert it, and he would not go.

By this time Frances and Mr. Langham had

joined the wondering throng, and Louisa was g[illegible]e to summon her mother; whose toilet had [illegible]ot yet reached that stage in which she permit[illegible]ed herself to be visible. She did not, therefore, [illegible]ke the Grecian mother, 'rush dishevelled;' but, h[illegible]w-ever, alarmed and filled with presentiment of [illegible]vil, she waited till the mysterious operations of the dressing-room had in some degree concealed t[illegible]ose ravages of time that grieve the heart and pain the eye of woman.

"Is Miss Grosvenor in the habit of taking the key out of her door?" she inquired of Ma'm[illegible]selle Valerie, looking very pale, but retaining the cold dignity of her voice and manner.

the intensity of the interest, and, indeed, only obscurely conscious that something was wrong—he one attempted to move on; but was restrained r Bontems; seeing which, Mr. Damer stepped fore him into the chamber. There was but a n light in the room, for the window-curtains, re closed; and all was silent as death. In an ove at the farther extremity stood the bed, with blue silk drapery, which shaded the pillow from e eager eyes that were peering in at the door. ore to gain time than light—rather to defer the aded moment than to let in day on what he red to see—Mr. Damer first drew back the ndow-curtains, and then with a sinking heart pped across the room, and lifted the drapery. ut no pale corpse was there! No Isabel, alive or ad! The coverings were undisturbed, the pillow pressed. "She is not here! She has not been bed!" he cried; whereupon everybody pressed rwards into the room exclaiming,

"How extraordinary! Where can she be?" and forth.

"Where's Bel?" said Sir Francis.

"Has any one seen Miss Grosvenor to-day?" ired her Ladyship of the astonished servants, o at first looked each at the other; and then by

degrees, first one and then another, answered, that they had not.

"I have brought this to give her," said Sir Francis. "Where is she?"

"I wish you would go to your room, Sir Francis," said her Ladyship, impatiently.

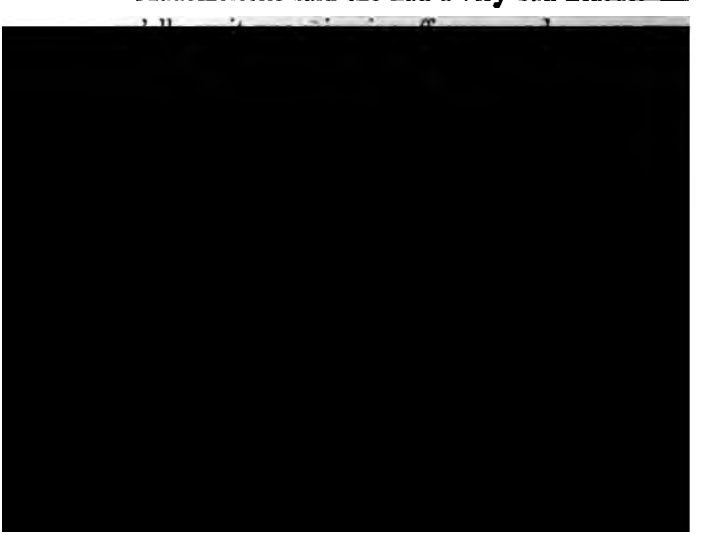
"I want Bel!" said the old man.

"Where's Ma'm'selle Valerie? Did you see Miss Grosvenor in bed before you left her last night?"

"Non, Miladi; elle ne le voulait pas."

"What do you mean? Why wouldn't she let you!"

"Mademoiselle said she had a very bad headach[illegible]



fled to avoid the marriage she abhorred; but whither? Where was her refuge? Was it beneath those dark waters where so many sad souls have sought a home? or had she, with the collusion of Ma'm'selle Valerie, whom he half suspected, escaped to England? He hoped it was the latter; but his fears were stronger than his hopes.

Not only he, however, but every member of the family, except Sir Francis, put the same interpretation on her absence; they all saw that she had fled to escape being united to a man she could not love. But they all knew before, as well as now, that she did not love him; that he was the sort of man she ever could love; yet had no one tried to save her; or even whilst they were lavishing large sums in rings and bracelets, brooches and aigrettes, each vying with the other in the splendour of their gifts, had they ever reflected on the hideous sacrifice for which they were adorning their victim, or on the life of misery that awaited one to whom affection was a necessity of existence!

Yes, they all knew it, if they could have found time to question themselves on the subject; but people, somehow or other, can't stop to look into such matters. Everybody wants to get on; the motto of life seems to be "keep moving;" which-

ever way you go, in whatever ditch you may fin
yourself at the end of your journey; only get alon
Let's see you do something, good or bad, right
wrong! It makes the world lively, and preve
stagnation.

Isabel was gone; Lady Grosvenor was not on
very much grieved, but she was angry, indigna
perplexed, and confounded. Still not only she, b
every member of the family, except Sir Francis an
Lady Georgina, felt more or less self-condemne
Nobody but William Damer entertained any appre
hensions about life, for the reason above intimated
namely, that nobody else had any right compre
hension of her character and feelings. They al

étui in his hand, turning back ever and anon to cry "Where is she? I want to give her this;" Mr. Langham started for Meurice's, to convey the sad intelligence to the bridegroom. In the meantime, the ladies retired to their rooms in order to divest themselves of their wedding finery, and assume their usual attire; the preparations for the *déjeûner* were cleared away by the wondering servants; and as it was too late to send notices to all the expected guests, two footmen were stationed at the gate, commissioned to stop all carriages, and prevent their owners alighting, being instructed to say Miss Grosvenor was very ill, and the ceremony consequently postponed.

Of all the surprises occasioned by this catastrophe, there was no surprise like that of Sir Abraham Towers, who stood, when he heard of it, with his mouth open and his eyes distended, looking like an amazed cod-fish! Mr. Langham had found him just stepping into his carriage, and had considerately led him back to his apartment before he communicated the news, which he did in the most delicate manner possible, breaking ground by expressing his regrets that the marriage could not take place on that day. But when he proceeded to explain the nature of the obstacle, he had

the pain of discovering that Sir Abraham could o
put one construction on his bride's disappearan
namely, that she had gone off with somebody e
It was in vain that Mr. Langham represented t
the thing was impossible, the imputation injuric
and that no mortal connected with her entertai
such a suspicion; the Baronet was incredulous
sulky, and obstinately determined to admit of
other explanation.

Perhaps he really thought as he said; perhap
was a cunning salvo to his wounded vanity,
fools are often cunning when their self-love is i
plicated. However this be, his conviction seen
immovcable; and the interview terminated w

CHAPTER XVII.

WHILST Frederick Capel was devoting all his leisure hours to Agnes, it was impossible he should not be struck by the anomaly of so young and beautiful a woman being alone in Paris, without friends and without any apparent object. Her extreme uncommunicativeness, too, added to his perplexity; and many a time he asked himself, "What can she be doing here?"

Poor Agnes! She was falling in love with him; sitting patiently in her dull room all day, supported by the hope that the evening would bring her a visit; and it was to lure him there the oftener that she had requested him to inquire for her

say that he was only ...
but again ... the power
Paris by another ...
mountain... except by ...
seriously meaning ... a ...
Frederick Capel seemed ...
world—a world of which
The books, the globes, ...
apparatus of science and
scattered in his room, ...
admiration. So young,
gentle and kind! With ...
upon that pale cheek, ...
smile!

Wonder and curiosity ...
It is not necessary to be ...
and many a woman has ...

was the enigma of her situation; and thus, whilst he filled and satisfied her mind, she only occupied a part of his.

Whilst she sat, almost unconsciously, tracing flowers with her needle, with a view of converting her work into a sufficient sum of money to carry her o England, her mind wholly absorbed by him, he as listening to lectures, or reading scarce books in e Bibliothèque Royale, and often not thinking of r till he was directing his steps homeward in e evening; but then he did. It was pleasant to l that there was a beautiful woman, with a blazing g on the hearth, and a cup of tea, ready to give m a welcome; and the recollection of Agnes and r lonely life, often brought him back, when but r her he would have sought some other recreation. He saw how glad she was when he came; or rather, he saw that she *was* glad, not how much; and it was so natural that she should be so, that he drew no conclusions from the welcome she gave him—a welcome not expressed in words, but manifested by the hospitable preparations made for his reception, and the late hour to which she sometimes waited tea in the hope he would return. In short, whilst he was only half in love with her, she was

wholly in love with him; but it was a love that expected no return. She felt herself too much his inferior to hope, or scarcely even to wish, for a corresponding sentiment on his part. She knew that she was again loving above her degree, yet she could not deny herself the pleasure of his visits.

Nevertheless, agreeable as it was, this sort of life could not last for ever. Her object in coming to Paris had failed. Her purse was nearly empty, and would have been quite so, but for the rigid economy she exercised; and though the strange delight she felt in the society of her new friend at times almost charmed away the sorrow that sat upon her heart, she knew that she must forsake the charmer, and return to her sister.

"Going away!" he exclaimed, when she hinted her intentions. "Don't tell me so, or I shall wish we had never met. How dull I shall be without you!"

Agnes blushed to the eyes, and said he had so many pursuits, he would never miss her.

"I beg your pardon," he answered; "I shall miss you dreadfully. I'll admit that, before you came, I did not feel the want that you have sup-

l; but a blessing we have once enjoyed we can-willingly relinquish. Must you really leave ?" he asked, with a degree of tenderness and iety that was perfectly genuine; for he felt at e moment as if he could not live without her. e all know how suddenly the thing rises in value at we are about to lose.

Agnes felt as if her heart was in her throat.

"I must go,"-she answered, with a trembling oice, keeping her eyes assiduously on her work.

"And why must you go?" he asked. "Why ust an acquaintance, so strangely begun, and so leasantly cultivated, be prematurely cut off? Why ust we part?"

And as he said this, he drew his chair nearer, nd took her hand in his. It was so like the preli-minary to a declaration of love, that, little as she ad expected such a thing, she could put no other onstruction on the earnestness and emotion he dis-played. Nor was she wrong. Her own agitation as so visible; she looked so beautiful; the idea of losing her for ever had come on him so suddenly, and he felt it so painfully, that in another moment the irrevocable words would have passed his lips. "Why," he was beginning to say, "why should

we ever part?" when a sudden terror seiz upon Agnes, that made her withdraw her ha with a start, which appeared like an instinct aversion.

What right had she to listen to such a declar tion? She, the degraded woman, the unwedd mother? What could she say to him? H explain her situation? How expect him to cre her story? Something of her old pride came o her; horror, at the idea of deceiving him; indig tion, at the idea of being disbelieved and doubted

"I must go back to my friends, that are expecti me," she answered, haughtily.

"I beg your pardon," he said, drawing back h chair, and altering the tone of his voice. "If I h

"Don't imagine," he said, "that I have the
ghtest desire to intrude into your confidence;
l, to prove that I have no such intention, I shall
you good night at once. I have some business
and that will occupy me till a late hour; so,
l night."

nd, before she could resolve what to say, he was
. His footstep echoed on the stairs, and
heard him close the door of his own apart-
.

hat a bitter moment that was, and what would
ave given to recal the last five minutes! She
empted to rush after him, and tell him all.
would not that betray her own feelings? and to
purpose? For, doubtless, when he heard her
, he would not only retreat, but retreat with
cion and disgust. No, it was all over—over,
recal. She should probably see him no more;
if she did, they could never more be on the
is they had been. She had tasted of a joy she
ld never taste again. Even the loss of her boy
ned for the moment to fade into the distance;
she read her own heart now, and she knew she
ed Frederick Capel, and that he was lost to her
ever.



But, hush! she hears him leave his room, and descend the stairs again. Is he coming back to her? No; he has passed her door without stopping, and is doubtless going out. "Ah! he'll never stop at my door again!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

SEVERAL hours had elapsed before Agnes was sufficiently composed to rise from the sofa and prepare to go to bed. She had wept till she could weep no longer, and she had with a despairing heart taken her resolution. She would go out on the following morning and sell her embroidery. That it would bring her more than enough money to take her to London, she did not doubt; for she had a skilful hand, and the work was extremely beautiful. Then she would pack up her small belongings, and send for a *fiacre*, pay her lodging, and depart without saying a word of her intentions to any one. She had only to drive to the Messageries, and take

the first diligence that started for any of th
whence she could embark for England.
would see no more; but she would leav
letter to be delivered after her departure;
letter, that if it could not efface the ill im
she had made, would at least convince him
was neither ungrateful nor insensible. Ho
she word it? She felt that she would like
well expressed. She wished to raise herse
esteem; to touch his heart, and make hi
her. How much should she tell him? Sh
hint that there was a secret—a grievous sec
she could be quite sure they would ne
again she might even tell him the truth; t

then drew her pen across it, and wrote "Dear Mr. Capel;" and then she leant her elbow on the table, and resting her forehead on the palm of her hand, she ruminated how to proceed. There are some letters very difficult to begin; and this was one of them; at least, to an inexperienced writer like Agnes. She had composed and rejected some half dozen introductory sentences, when she was disturbed by hearing the gate-bell ring sharply below. She had not observed Mr. Capel return; probably this was he, and she wondered if Pierre or Barbara would wake and admit him. Yes; she hears the gates unclosed, for the street was silent now; and noises were distinctly audible that in the day only formed part of the general clamour; and she rose, and placed her ear to the door that she might listen to his step as he passed. But he did not pass; the person, whoever it was, stopped and rang her bell. In the middle of the night! Who could it be?

"Who's there?" she said, without turning the key.

"It is I. Pray open the door!" Yes, it was Mr. Capel's voice; and a feeling of inexpressible joy came over her as she drew back the bolt; a

presentiment that this unexpected visit portend
her some unknown, undreamt of, happiness. E
hand shook so much, that she had scarcely pov
to turn the key in the lock, but when she h
done so, and thrown open the door, great was h
surprise to see he was not alone. Beside him th
stood a lady, wearing a bonnet and veil, and a da
silk cloak, that entirely enveloped her figu
Before he said a word, Mr. Capel lead the stran
into Agnes's room, and shut the door behi
him.

"I am come to ask you a great favour, M
Gibson," he said; "one that I feel assured yo
not refuse me. It is to allow this lady to sh

morrow morning," he continued, "I shall be happy to take your commands if I can be of any further sevice."

"Thank you! A thousand, and a thousand thanks!" murmured the stranger, clasping her hands in an enthusiasm of gratitude. After which he wished them a "good night," and disappeared, leaving Agnes alone with this unexpected bed-fellow, who had sunk into a chair, and was apparently weeping violently behind her veil.

"Won't you take off your bonnet and cloak?" said Agnes, feeling somewhat at a loss how to pr ceed.

"Oh, what will become of me! Oh dear! oh dear! oh dear!" sobbed the stranger, in a passion of anguish.

"Shall I make you a cup of tea? perhaps that would refresh you," said the hostess, blowing up her fire and preparing to boil some water, whilst the visitor continued to weep without heeding her.

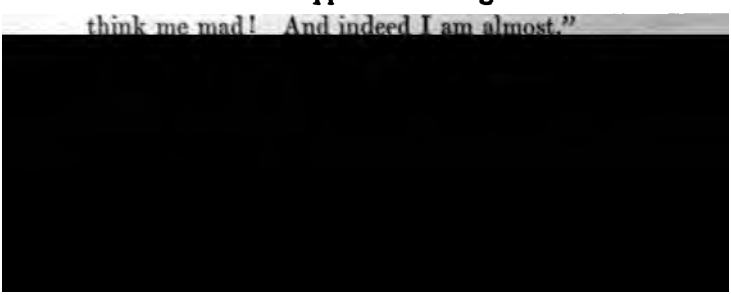
"Who can she be?" thought Agnes. "What can it mean?" feeling so embarrassed and amazed, that she was glad of the interval for reflection afforded by the tea-making. When it was ready

she poured out a cup and approached her visitor, who was wiping her eyes with a superbly embroidered cambric handkerchief. Moreover, from a change of posture, her cloak had fallen open, and Agnes was more than ever surprised to see that she wore a rich satin pelisse, and a pair of shoes that had once been white, but were now sadly disfigured by mud. The hand too that held the handkerchief was adorned by several valuable rings.

"She is some lady in distress," thought Agnes, her confidence in Mr. Capel precluding any suspicions unfavourable to the stranger, in spite of the questionable circumstances under which she appeared.

"Do, Ma'am, take a little tea!" she said, addressing her deferentially.

"Thank you," answered the lady, lifting her veil. "How kind it is of you! And how ashamed I am! It must appear so strange! You must think me mad! And indeed I am almost."



agitated now; the blood forsook her cheek, she stood trembling behind the chair like a culprit.

"My throat was parched," said the stranger, as Agnes took the cup from her. "I don't know how to thank you, nor your friend, the gentleman that brought me here. Does he live in this house?"

"Yes, Ma'am; he lives in the apartment over mine."

"And can you tell me his name, and who he is?"

"His name is Frederick Capel; and I believe he does nothing but read and attend lectures. He is a very learned young man, I believe."

"I can never be grateful enough to him!" continued the lady, bursting again into tears at the recollection of the perils she had escaped. "I had lost my way—I didn't know where I was; and he saved me from some dreadful people! But I'm keeping you up. Pray do go to bed. I'll lie down on the sofa if you'll allow me till the morning, and then I'll no longer intrude on your hospitality."

"If you wouldn't mind lying down on my bed, Ma'am," said Agnes, timidly, and still speaking from behind the chair.

"I had much rather lie on the sofa," sai the other; "and you'll really oblige me if you' go to bed."

Agnes hesitated for a moment. "What is th use of concealing myself?" she thought. "I ha better brave it." And accordingly she proceed to prepare the sofa and arrange matters as we as she could for her guest. It happened th hitherto the light that stood on the table ha been behind her, so that her face was the shade; but she now contrived to reverse t position, and render it as visible as possible; t it was not till the lady rose to take off h bonnet that her eyes fell full upon the featu of her hostess.

"Good heavens!" she exclaimed, in the great amazement; "Agnes Crawfurd!" Agnes look as much confounded as a detected thief. "Wh in the world has brought you to Paris?"

"A great misfortune that happened to m Ma'am," faltered Agnes.

"In which I fear Lionel was very guilty," sa the guest, seeing that she hesitated. "I do mean to excuse your fault, Agnes; but neit should we excuse Lionel's. I hope you are n living here with him."

"Oh no, Miss Isabel! God forbid! I came to Paris to try to see him, but it was only in hopes of recovering my child."

"Your child! Has he got your child?"

"I thought he might have him, Ma'am; for he was taken away by somebody in the street; and I thought it might be Mr. Grosvenor.

"Oh no; I should think that very unlikely. And have you seen him?"

"Yes once, Ma'am; and, at first, I had some hopes; but I've none now. I don't think it was Mr. Grosvenor."

"And did my brother come here to see you?' inquired Isabel, alarmed for herself.

"Oh no, Ma'am; Mr. Grosvenor does not know where I am. I don't wish to see him at all. All I desire is to recover my child."

"And he ought to assist you to find him," said Isabel, forgetting her own griefs for the moment, and proceeding to inquire into the child's disappearance.

The narration of the story reviving all Agnes's painful recollections, she exhibited so much genuine distress and so much affection for her boy, that her guest's gentle heart was quite moved; and after

expressing her sympathy, she inquired what grou
there were for supposing Mr. Grosvenor concer
in the affair.

"None, Ma'am; but that he was his own chil
answered Agnes, blushing.

"But what could my brother want with hi
Besides, he does not care for children; he does
seem to care for Frank—I mean Lady Georgi
child."

"Is Lady Georgina married, Ma'am?"

"To be sure; she's Lionel's wife. Didn't
know it?"

"No, Ma'am; I never heard Mr. Grosvenor
married," answered Agnes, with perfect in

shouldn't be in the distress I am now, Agnes, if it were not that I am expected to marry a person I don't like, and that I would rather die than marry. And so you never heard of Lionel's marriage?"

"No, Ma'am; I saw Lady Georgina once when I was working at Madame de Ville's, in Bruton Street; but I don't think she knew me. I shouldn't have known her, I dare say, if Lady Minevar had not been with her."

"So you worked at Madame de Ville's?" said Isabel; and from this she was led on to ask several other questions regarding Agnes's mode of life for the last few years.

"And did my brother do nothing to assist you?"

"Oh yes, Ma'am; I received an allowance through Mr. Conyers, for the support of the child, till I was able to support him myself.

"And then was it withdrawn?"

"No, Ma'am; I gave it up."

Isabel began to feel her heart quite drawn towards her old friend. "That was right, Agnes," she said, looking at her approvingly. "And what are your plans for the future?"



work at dressmaking, or ar
find me in a decent livelihoo

Agnes could not help
"Ah, Ma'am," she said, "s
do for you!"

"I had rather break stones
than marry a man I detest.
to-night to avoid a hateful m
die to avoid it. I should hav
accident, and I believe it wou
I had, for what I am to do
tell. Go back, I dare not!"
astounded to see one of the l
in such a predicament, and
advise; but she strongly rec
to take some rest, and at le
prospect of sleeping, but in
hostess to lie down. she cons

room! Do not, for the world, let any one know I am here!"

"Mr. Capel, Ma'am?"

"Oh, yes, of course; but remember he does not know who I am; and I entreat you not to give him the least hint on the subject."

Agnes promised she would not; and then, in order to satisfy her guest, she stretched herself on the bed, but without taking off her clothes.

It is needless to say that neither closed their eyes in sleep. The strangeness of the circumstance filled Agnes with so much amazement, that for the time being, it banished all memory of her own cares. Her mind was possessed with wonder, whilst Isabel, who had been for a short time diverted from the recollection of her own desperate fortunes, by the surprise of meeting Agnes, now that she was flung back on her reflections, was assailed by a double tide of wretchedness and perplexity. Where was she to go? What should she do?

After allowing her maid to take off her dress, and remove the flowers from her hair (fearing escape might be cut off by the closing of the gates), she bade her leave her; and then catch-

ing up her bonnet, and wrapping a pelisse and cloak about her, she had slipped down stairs, and out of the house, unseen by any one, just as Lady Jane Mortimer's carriage drove away; carrying off the key of her chamber door in her pocket, in order that nobody should get in to discover her absence.

Almost delirious with the horror inspired by the destiny that awaited her; she thought only of rushing to the river, and plunging into it with all her sorrows; but in her haste and confusion she had forgotten to take off her white satin shoes, and some loose revellers of the night espying so attractive a pair of feet and ankles were pursuing her, when wild with terror, she rushed into the arms of a stranger, crying, "Save me! Save me!"

The stranger was Frederick Capel, who, vexed and mortified at having so nearly made a fool of himself, and annoyed at the rebuff he had incurred, all for a woman whom he was sensible he did not really love, had gone out to allay his irritation by a walk in the Champs Elysées, in which direction he was making his way when Isabel met him.

A short explanation sufficed to satisfy him that the fugitive was a gentlewoman in some extraordinary crisis of fortune; so after gallantly defending her, he brought her to seek shelter with his neighbour.

CHAPTER XIX.

After dozing a little towards morning, Agnes rose from her bed betimes, and was moving about softly, in order to arrange her room, and have

"Oh, wait a minute," answered Isabel, "till I can get up, and speak to him;" whereupon she arose from the sofa, whilst Agnes arranged her dress a little. "Give me my bonnet and veil," she added, sitting down. "My head's so bad I can scarcely hold it up."

Mr. Capel entered, bowing respectfully, hoping she was well, and begging to know in what way he could be of use to her.

"I am so much indebted to you already, Sir," she said, "that I am quite ashamed to trouble you further; but as you are so kind, I will confess there is one thing which would oblige me greatly. I want to go to England immediately; and if you would kindly take me a place in a diligence that goes to Dieppe, you would do me a great service. I should like my place taken for to-night, if you please."

Having promised to fulfil her commission he was about to depart, when she said:

"There is one thing more. I know it must seem very strange; but I conjure you not to mention your having met with me—not to anybody whatever; not even if you were to hear that inquiries were made; and then turning to-



and I'm sure she will gi
night; and then I shall de
further trouble."

Considerable hesitation a
panied the delivery of this li
it was concluded, the spea
the sofa, and covering her
she fell a-weeping. After g
rance that she might rely
Capel took his leave; and as
stopped to have a chat wit
him with a somewhat peculia
nance, which he pretended

"I was sorry to make y
let me in last night, Barb
the lady I had with me w
Gibson's, who, having been

"Possible!" said Barbara to herself; "c'est drôle ça;" and immediately ascending the stairs she rang at Agnes's bell, to the great alarm of Isabel, who could not divest her mind of the idea that she might be traced and discovered. "Who can that be?" she said, starting up, and endeavouring to hide herself in the recess where the bed stood.

"Voulez-vous que je vous monte du bois?" said Barbara, making a step into the door, which Agnes held in her hand.

"No!" answered Agnes, shaking her head, and endeavouring to shut it.

"Ah, vous en avez encore!" said Barbara, casting her eyes round the room, which alighted first on Isabel's bonnet and veil, which lay on a chair; and secondly, on the sofa from which she had just risen. "Ah, vous avez du monde!" she added, peeping round the corner into the alcove, where she caught a glimpse of the visitor.

"Oui, une amie," said Agnes, closing the door, whereupon Barbara descended the stairs again, and comfortably resumed her duties, relieved from an uneasy sense of curiosity. As soon as she was gone Isabel returned to the sofa, still complaining

dreadfully of her head. Agnes thought she looked very ill, and moved about softly in order not to disturb her; but there was no repose. She kept turning uneasily from side to side; dozing for a minute or two occasionally, uttering low moans whilst she slept; and then starting into wakefulness with an expression of fear and horror on her countenance. About mid-day Agnes slipped down stairs, and begged Barbara to bring her a little soup from the *traiteur's* next door; but when it came the sick stomach recoiled, and Isabel turned away her head, and begged to have it removed from the room. Tea was the only thing she could take.

into insignificance beside what appeared a much severer distress. Adversity falling on one from whom prosperity seemed inseparable, struck her with a feeling approaching to awe. What a storm of fortunes, she fancied, that must be, which had driven such a dainty bark from its safe moorings! For her own part, things had never gone very well with her, and she had not so far to fall; but what a declension was this! With Isabel, too, the most pleasing recollections of her own childhood was connected; for, being nearly of the same age, they had been playfellows previous to the period when Agnes's eyes were opened, and she saw that her companions were fine ladies, and she but a farmer's daughter. Experience of the world, and her love for her child, had cured her of her old weakness on this subject; but these reminiscences, combined with the early habit of looking upon the inhabitants of Ravenscliffe as amongst the greatest people in the world, inspired her with the tenderest sentiments of sympathy and devotion for her guest, on whom she watched and waited all day like a loving sister.

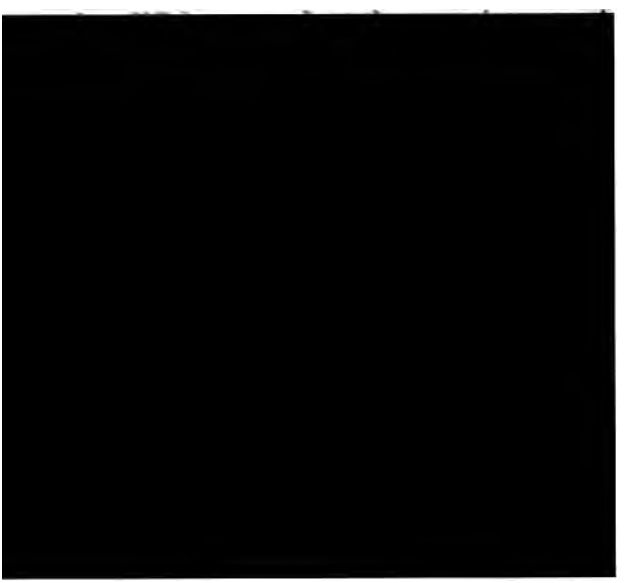
As the diligence was not to start till eight o'clock, it was near seven before Mr. Capel arrived. At length he rang.

[redacted] a coach at a quarter-past seven [redacted] It is better to be in time. Then [redacted] soon a bustle at the last."

[redacted] turned her eyes towards Isabel, asleep [redacted]

"I am afraid she is very ill," she whispered [redacted] think she's at all fit to travel. Look [redacted] stepped softly forward, and looked [redacted] whose face, however, was turned to th [redacted] "What should we do? Shall I wake her?" [redacted]

"I think you had better, and let her decide f[redacted]



"I'm sure you had better not attempt it. You had better lie down again."

"But I must go," she said. "Give me my bonnet."

But it would not do; the body was too sick to obey the will, and she was obliged to allow herself to be replaced on the sofa. Perceiving she was too ill to observe him, Mr. Capel then entered the room.

"I see it's impossible she can travel," said he; "and I am quite at a loss what to do with her. I wonder who in the world she can be! I found her in the street, in the most extraordinary circumstances for a lady, which she evidently is."

"She can stay here till she is better," said Agnes.

"But that would be such a dreadful intrusion on you," he answered, "though the offer is most kind, that I cannot think of it."

"The truth is," said Agnes, "she is not quite a stranger to me; and I—"

"You know who she is?" he exclaimed, with astonishment.

"Perhaps I do," she answered; "but as she has begged me not to tell, I must not."

"And has she no friends to whom we could tell her? She seems quite young."

"It's her friends, her family indeed, that she is running away from; and as she is most anxious for concealment, she must remain with me till she is better. But it appears to me she should have a doctor, only that sending for one might lead to a discovery of where she is."

"If she is not better to-morrow," said Mr. Capel, "I think I can bring a medical friend to see her who will keep the secret. I'll call in the morning as I come down."

With that, after asking if he could be of any further service, he took his leave.

pt them on all night, the agitation and con-
ion of her mind rendering her quite forgetful
the danger she was incurring. When Agnes
covered the state they were in, she was not sur-
ised to see her so ill.

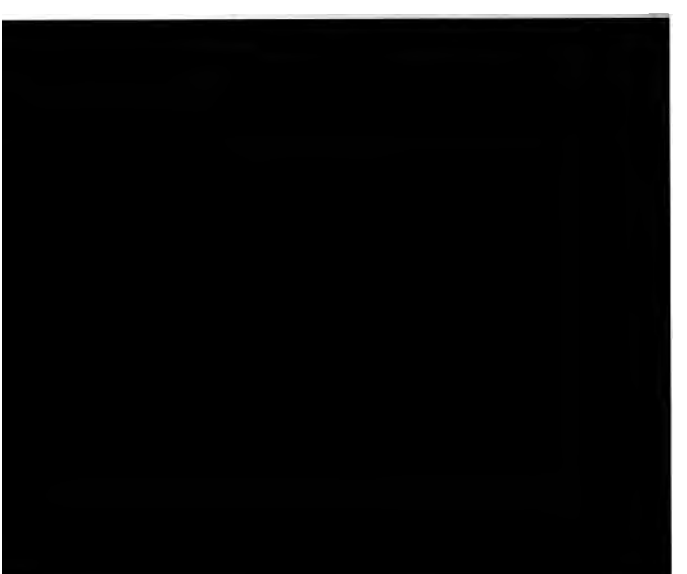
As it was now clear that the visit would be of
ne duration, Agnes set about arranging the bed,
which, after taking off Isabel's clothes, she laid
r—quite unopposed, the poor girl being too ill
exercise any will on the subject — and then
epared herself to sit up all night, and watch
r.

Long before daybreak, the invalid was quite
lirious. Sleep forsook her now; and with bright
es and flushed cheeks, she talked incessantly.
ad was Agnes when the morning brought Mr.
pel, who, on learning the condition of the
ient, went in search of his friend, with whom
long he returned.

Monsieur Emile, as he called him, was a young
n, and a medical student; but one who had
lked the hospitals, and was not without expe-
nce. He said the lady was very ill, and would,
feared, be worse. According to the most ap-
oved French school of physic, however, he used



no active remedies, but confined himself to the *mistura expectorans*, with diluent drinks, and so forth: a system which seems to be fast making its way in this country also, where the heroic treatment formerly in vogue with the highest members of the faculty will soon be left for the delectation of country apothecaries. So much we owe to Homœopathy, not to mention a great deal more.



CHAPTER XX.

Now that Isabel had become so ill, as to be incapable of recognising him, or being annoyed at his presence, Mr. Capel often shared with Agnes the fatigue of attending on her; and the mutual interest they felt in the patient having removed the embarrassment arising from their little misunderstanding, the demeanour of both became much more easy and familiar than it had ever been. This was especially the case with Agnes, who, occupied with her guest, had ceased to think of herself; and who appeared to much greater advantage, now that the too much consciousness produced by the desire to please, or rather the apprehension of displeasing, had vanished.



incurring. Indeed, b
Mr. Capel would have
some effort to restore
Agnes was most unwill
Mr. Capel understood
an unhappy marriage
warmly engaged, that
risk rather than expo
fate.

"She really intended
river," Agnes told hin
but she was in a state
and we need not be af
She could not, she says-
to do it in cold blood.
aunt she has at Bright
protect her; and if we
she would do that still.

"If he gives her over," answered Agnes, weeping, "I will then tell you who she is, and you shall inform her friends of her being here. In which case," thought she, "I must leave this house before they come. It would never do for them to know she had been under my roof."

Isabel, however, did not die. When the crisis of her disorder came, she took a favourable turn, and Monsieur Emile said she would recover, but would need great care for some time. On opening her eyes to consciousness, her recollection of the past was naturally confused, and when she beheld Agnes by her bedside, she imagined herself at Ravenscliffe, and inquired for her mamma and sisters. Gradually the truth was recalled to her.

"And I have been very ill," she said. "What trouble I must have given you!"

"Oh no," replied Agnes, "it was no trouble; besides, Mr. Capel helped me when I needed help."

"How good of him. As soon as I can sit up, he must come and see me."

Presently there was a ring at the bell, and Agnes went to the door, and spoke a few minutes to somebody outside of it: Isabel inquired who it was.

They needed each [illegible] ... that he would [illegible] for
often felt alarmed [illegible] ... that she would like.
incurring. Indeed [illegible] ... came with the same
Mr. Capel would
some effort to [illegible] ...abel said. "What
Agnes was most [illegible] ...d Agnes corro-
Mr. Capel w[illegible] ... ...by, came M.
an unhappy [illegible] ... ...stances of the
warmly eng[illegible] ... ...ity of his
risk rather [illegible] ... ... her
fate. [illegible] ... ...and
"She
river," [illegible] ... ... Mr.

...e is very superior," answered

...hen she was a little stronger and
... without danger, after thanking
...mile for his attention, she alluded to
...ion to his friend.

...e bonté pour une inconnue!" she said.
... c'est le meilleur garçon du monde!"
...d Emile. "I have known him these three
and I like him better every time I see him.
...ur l'esprit! Ah! c'est lui qui en a, ma

Is he very clever?" she inquired.

"C'est tout étonnant," replied Emile. "He has ad so much, and knows so many things, that we ften accuse him of being some old fellow who possesses the elixir of life and has recovered his youth after living a hundred years at least."

"And is he in any profession?"

"No; he has a little fortune, *tout petit, tout petit,* but enough to support him; for his desires are very moderate, and his tastes extremely simple —that is, in everything but books."

"What an interesting person!" said Isabel.

"He's a very extraordinary man, I assure you,"

returned Emile, gravely; "and I think, some d will be a very distinguished one. I cannot imag so much talent remaining in obscurity. In Fra it certainly would not remain so long."

Isabel had yet seen but little of the subject these commendations. In her distress she l rushed into the arms which manfully opened receive her. After indignantly dispersing *canaille* she was flying from, he had offered he shelter for the night with a lady of his quaintance when, in an agony of grief, she wr her hands, and in answer to his inquiry whither should conduct her, exclaimed, frantically, that knew not where to go to. He was scarcely thi but he had, as he told Agnes, read many stra things in his life, and seen many stranger. had wide sympathies, and a large understanding human nature. He could comprehend and al for much that by narrower intellects and feeli would be misconstrued and condemned. He k that a slight error on her own part, or the m conduct of others, will sometimes involve a wo in painful and suspicious circumstances; and had an intuitive conviction that this was such case; but till he saw her raving in delirium,

knew almost as little of her features as she did of his. She had not had courage to raise her eyes to his face, and she had concealed her own under her bonnet and veil. Now, however, she desired to see him, for she was fast converting him into a hero of romance.

"If I met Mr. Capel in the street," she said to Agnes, "I'm sure I shouldn't know him, but I should know his voice. He has a beautiful voice. I remember when he spoke to the people that were insulting me, the tones of his voice inspired me with immediate confidence. The next time he calls, say I shall be happy to see him."

She was lying on the sofa, wrapt in her own silk pelisse and a shawl of Agnes's; and on her head she wore a pretty little cap which her hostess had manufactured for her. She was much wasted, but where there is youth, beauty survives a great deal of sickness. When Agnes had dressed her and braided her hair, Isabel asked her to bring the looking-glass.

"I want to see how thin I am," she said. But that was not the sole reason—she wished to take a peep at her own face.

When Mr. Capel came, he approached her with

the greatest reverence; his voice faltered as he said how glad he was to see her recovering. She tried to sit up, and holding out a transparent little hand, she said:

"Oh, Sir, how can I thank you for all your kindness?"

"Don't thank me," he answered. "If I have been of use to you, the service does me more good than it does you. I mean," he added with a smile, seeing that she looked surprised, or as if she did not clearly understand his meaning, "I mean that to have assisted you in your trouble has made me happy. It does not fall to every man in a lifetime to have such an opportunity."

"And yet there are plenty of people needing assistance, too," she answered.

"But it is not always equally agreeable to assist them," he said playfully.

One day, Isabel was lying on the sofa, with a book in her hand lent her by Mr. Capel. It was a volume containing an account of a few of the most interesting and startling facts of science. Some allusions he had made in conversation had induced her to ask him questions which led to his offering her the volume. Of science, Isabel knew no more

than is usually comprised in the education of accomplished young ladies, but she was acquainted with the terms, and she had attended the *séances* of fashionable lecturers, so that though knowing little, she was not unprepared to learn, or incapable of comprehending. And added to the interest of the subject itself, there was another that helped to sharpen her wits, namely, the desire to enjoy and appreciate his conversation. So much she admitted to herself; perhaps there was a third, with respect to which she was less candid; perhaps she wished to please and render herself agreeable to him by cultivating her mind in a direction to which his own tastes and talents particularly pointed. Howbeit, Isabel had diligently perused her volume, and had thrown herself back for a little repose, occasionally closing her eyes, and occasionally opening them to observe Agnes, who sat on the other side of the hearth, engaged in manufacturing certain necessary articles of dress for Isabel, who had been hitherto much indebted to her hostess's wardrobe.

"Agnes," said she, at last, after a considerable silence, "do you know, that in spite of all that has happened, I am persuaded you are a very good girl."

Agnes blushed a little, and smiled.

"I don't know, Ma'am," she said. "I have been a very foolish one, I'm afraid."

"Yes, you have been foolish no doubt; and more than foolish, you have been very wrong; but what I mean is, that though you have committed a great fault, I believe your heart has never been corrupted. You have erred, Agnes, from too much loving."

At these words Agnes's blushes deepened, and she hung down her head.

"I know," continued Isabel, "what an absorbing passion love is; I know how it makes one forget everything but itself; and I can easily understand that if Lionel set himself systematically to win your affections, it would have been very difficult for you to resist him. He is very much altered now, but at that time he was, certainly, extremely handsome, and I can imagine very fascinating when he chose to be so. It's a cruel thing that men should think themselves at liberty to seduce a woman and then remorselessly desert her, merely because her humble condition makes her defenceless. It's a cowardly thing, too, for they dare not do it with their equals."

This long speech, long for the yet feeble invalid,

ered at intervals; Agnes, the while, away and making no answer.

me, Agnes," continued Isabel, after a ring which, she had been watching the gers and putting her own construction on anion's silence; this construction being es was ashamed to confess the love she for one who had evinced such con- s indifference for her. "Tell me; had long attached to my brother? When did ions begin?"

Grosvenor began to be particular to me was living at the castle, but I didn't give ncouragement," replied Agnes.

how did he see you after you left us?"

sed to come to the farm with the young liss Louisa and Miss Frances; and once he e with a doctor he brought to see my en he was ill; that was the first time he ne openly."

after that did he come often?"

seldom. I didn't give him any encou- to come."

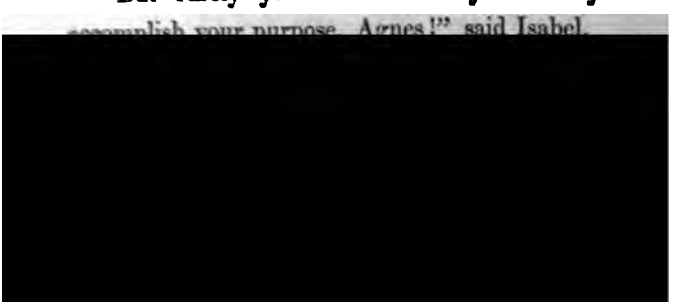
when did you first become attached to es?"

"I believe I liked him from the beginning, even from the time we were children, when we used to dance together; but I don't think I was ever in love with Mr. Grosvenor; at least, not very much in love. But I had never liked anybody else."

"But, good heavens, Agnes," exclaimed Isabel, with an expression of disapprobation; "if it was not love, what in the world could induce you to do what you did?"

"I don't mean to say I had no regard for Mr. Grosvenor," returned Agnes; "but it would not be the truth if I were to say that it was my love for him that brought me into trouble. I am afraid it was more my own pride and foolishness. I can laugh at myself, now that I am older and know more; but I had all my life been dissatisfied with my own situation, and I wanted to be a lady."

"But surely you took the very last way to accomplish your purpose, Agnes!" said Isabel.



gnes blushed again, and was silent. She had resolution to confess what she feared would e herself more than ever ridiculous, and give arful shock to the aristocratic prejudices of ughter of Ravenscliffe.

He surely was not so wicked as to pro- you marriage!" exclaimed Isabel. "Good ns! How shameful!" she continued, inter- ng Agnes's silence affirmatively. "I could have believed anything so bad of him! But my good girl, could you be so silly as to e him?"

didn't at first, Ma'am . . . ."

But you must have known that papa and na would never consent to such a thing!"

Oh, yes, Ma'am, I knew that very well; but Grosvenor promised me Sir Francis and my should never know it."

So that, in short, he systematically deceived "

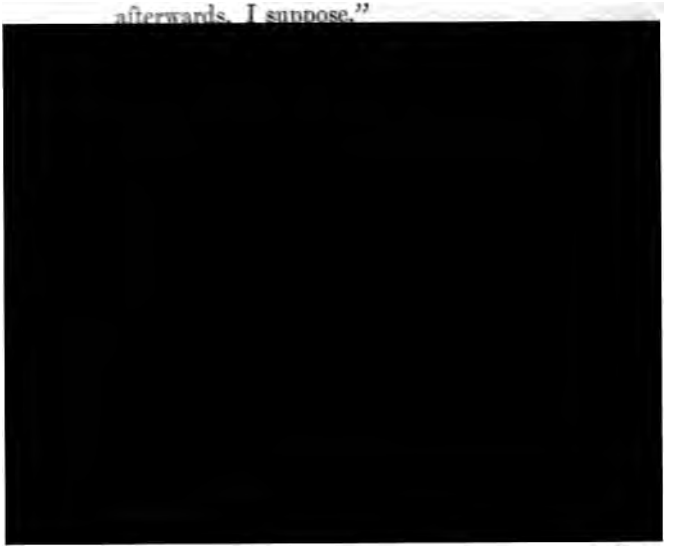
I don't think it would have happened if my r had lived, for I was very unwilling to y him secretly; but when my father died, we had to leave the farm, I had no home; I had then to accept or refuse Mr. Grosvenor

for ever; because I knew it would never do fo me to set up as a dress-maker at Ellerton if was to marry him afterwards; and that so I mu do it then or not at all. I ought to have refuse I know; but I had little time for reflectio as I was obliged to do one thing or the oth directly."

"It was cruel and wicked of my brother t make a promise he never meant to perform. B why, Agnes, didn't you say you couldn't liste to him till you were married?"

"So I did, Ma'am."

"But he persuaded you he would marry yo afterwards, I suppose."



you gave me shelter that night I came here! I wonder you didn't turn me into the street! And here have you been so tenderly nursing me, the sister of the man that has so infamously wronged you!"

"It would be very wrong, Ma'am, to blame you for Mr. Grosvenor's conduct. Besides, I know I had nobody to blame but myself. I shouldn't have believed him; and I shouldn't have consented to marry him unknown to Sir Francis and my Lady."

"That's very true, Agnes; but your fault is nothing to his; and I don't see what right you had to disbelieve him. Why should you suspect a gentleman of such infamous conduct? Oh, Lionel! Shameful! shameful!"

Isabel next inquired into the circumstances connected with the ceremony; and Agnes related to her everything that had occurred at Ravenscliffe, and since.

"Oh, Agnes!" she said, when she had heard the whole story, "how far superior you have shown yourself to my brother, who ought to have known so much better than you! It makes me blush to think how the whole family have treated

you. But we never knew the truth; at least I did not, and I am sure papa and mamma couldn't have known it. They little think what they owe you! Suppose you had brought an action against Lionel. What a disgrace it would have been to the family!"

"I would never have done that," answered Agnes. "That would have only made it worse."

"But how many would have done it for the sake of getting money? Agnes," she added, holding out her hand to her companion, who rose and modestly took it, "I'm worse off than you now, and may never be better; but come what may, I shall always consider you as a sister," and

CHAPTER XXI.

THOUGH not a bad man, Leighton's principles, as has been shown, were not solid enough to resist poverty and temptation. He would have preferred, on all accounts, leading a decently honest life; but since the world seemed to have rendered that line of conduct inconsistent with living at all, he must needs submit to the exigencies of his fate, and live as he could. He had remained in Paris after his interview with Lionel Grosvenor, partly because he was unwilling to expend his small stock of money in a journey to England, more especially since, had he done so, he knew of no means of there replenishing his purse; and

you. But ...ticed he saw symptoms
did not, a... ...f his late master, ou
have know... ...he but convince him of
you! Si... ...d considerable claims for
Lionel.

the fam... ...was gone, and his neces-
"I ... ...ssing, he could not imagine
Agnes. ...uld present himself before
"B... ...d not been able to discover;
sake ... ...probabilities were that she
holdi... ...husband. He had also certain
and ... ...ge towards her for having
now ... ...that rendered him unwilling
may ... ...ble. He preferred, if possible,

ss, let him by degrees into certain secrets connected with Watson's mode of life. He ere long discerned that he was not the high caste gentleman he had assumed to be in their interviews; but a man whose purse was somewhat slenderly furnished, and who associated with second-rate company, or with men of a higher class, who were out at elbows. His intimacy with Lionel had kept him up at college; but Lionel disliked him now, and avoided him as much as he could consistently with his own safety, which by the way he thought much less endangered since he had seen Agnes, in whom he discovered no traces of disappointed ambition, nor any desire for vengeance; but on the contrary, an apparent indifference to the past, which he could not comprehend; and a thorough alienation from himself, which was equally inexplicable.

Thus unsupported, poor, and disowned by his aristocratic relations, Mr. Watson naturally declined in the scale of society; and Leighton soon remarked that he was in the habit of visiting inferior *cafés*, billiard-rooms frequented by swindlers and black-legs, and other places of ill-repute; observations which went far to confirm

his previous impression with regard to the motives of Watson's interference about Agnes; which he felt satisfied were selfish ones, although how the scheme was calculated to benefit him it was not easy to discern. Now Leighton felt a considerable interest in these motives, since to discover them might in some way serve himself. Knowledge is power; the ex-valet had never heard this axiom; but truth is eternal, and every man acts upon the principle, whether aware of the universal proposition or not. Moreover, to an idle man there is a certain fascination when once begun, in watching the proceedings of an individual, especially if you have got a theory to establish, or a mystery to unravel; so that having nothing else to do, and being somehow pervaded by an undefinable instinct that the bettering of his fortunes lay in that direction, Leighton continued to track Mr. Watson's footsteps with an assiduity that if called upon to do so, he could hardly have accounted for himself.

Amongst the men who frequented Mr. Watson's company, there was one whose person was not unfamiliar to Leighton, who remembered him about town ever since he himself had been in service. At

the various watering-places too, those within a day's journey of London, he was always to be seen hanging about the libraries and billiard-rooms; and Leighton had heard it asserted, that he was the younger brother of a nobleman of unimpeached reputation, who had ran through all he had, and been for some time in the Bench, whence he at length emerged to live by his wits. He was a tall, red-faced man; with a high nose, bald head, and small eyes; who, dressed in the jockey style, was known to have no money, and to indulge himself in a habit of kicking people out of doors who persecuted him with demands for any. Yet he never looked as if he wanted for any of the luxuries of life. His figure continued portly, and his complexion rubicund; even his nose never "paled its ineffectual fires." In short, he possessed every external symptom of prosperity but one; and that was, that he seemed to have no friends. But as he was reputed to be an unerring shot, neither did he appear to have any enemies. Some people asserted that he was married; some said not, but however that might be, he was never seen with any one, male or female, with the exception of one faded woman who, in a poke bonnet and veil, sometimes

hung sadly upon his arm; not when he frequented the public resorts and promenades, there she was never seen; but they were occasionally met together taking a country walk, or, on a summer's evening, pacing the sands on the sea-shore.

In Paris, however, he appeared less solitary; he had even several associates, and amongst them Mr. Lewis Watson, with whom he seemed to be on terms of considerable intimacy; insomuch that they often met at the same *restaurateur's* and dined together; then walked away, arm-in-arm, to some of the little theatres, and from that to a billiard-room or gaming-house in the Palais Royal, to finish the night's amusement. Sometimes, when Leighton had watched them into a coffee-room brilliantly illuminated and adorned with mirrors and marble tables, presided over by a full-dressed goddess seated at a high desk with a pen in her hand and an ink-bottle beside her, and observed them place themselves at a table near the window, he has stood outside counting the dishes that were placed upon the table, from the *potage* to the *soufflet* and the *fromage à la gruyère;* watching every mouthful they swallowed; thirsting for the foaming champaign and the cool claret as they lifted their glasses

e light to admire its rich purple hue, and ering how it was that they could dine so well he could not contrive to dine at all; since one m, he had reason to believe, had no money; he other he suspected to be not much better led.

re than once, when they emerged from the of the *café* where they had feasted on these ies, Leighton has followed them unobserved to next resort, Watson, being utterly ignorant the valet entertained any curiosity or sus- s about him, and Atherton, which was the of his companion, not even knowing him by . On one of these occasions, when the hungry ant outside had been flattening his nose st a window on the Boulevard Montmartre, ing the disappearance of the viands, he was k by the unusually serious and earnest ssion of the two countenances, which generally ose periods denoted nothing but an ardent ion to the affair in hand. It was not that neglected their dinner even now; on the ary, they ate plentifully and rapidly; but it vident that their minds were absent from the and engrossed by other matters; in regard to

which they seemed eager to translate their thoughts into words as soon as the principal business was over, and the attendance of the waiter could be dispensed with; for then, whilst the chesnuts remained untasted, they placed their arms on the table, and leaning forwards, conversed closely, almost mouth to mouth, with occasional gestures of a finger, or a hand, or a shake of the head, indicating the interest of the subject under discussion. There was now and then too, an eye cast over the shoulder, apparently to see if anybody was within hearing of their voices; and when a gentleman, whose appearance left in doubt as to his being an Englishman, entered the room, and seated himself at a table near them, they both immediately drew up, and with a warning glance at each other, began to shell their chesnuts with the *sang-froid* of men who had nothing else in the world to think of.

When they had finished their bottle of Château Margot, and were pushing back their chairs from

a it, watched their coming out, prepared to
iem whichever way they took. Presently
eared, and after a few words exchanged on
, they turned in the direction of the Porte
is; whereupon, Leighton slipped from
he coach, and drawing his hat over his
ked after them for some distance, without,
being able to overhear a word they said.
ed them, however, till they reached a lofty
ie extremity of the Boulevard Poissonnière,
med the entrance to very extensive stables
i man called Corbillon.

they paused so suddenly, that Leighton
ddly found himself upon their heels. So
he, that he distinctly heard Mr. Watson
: withdrew his arm:

must go in alone: it won't do for me
in it at all."

re shall I find you, when I come out?"
Atherton.

the way, at the Café Rouge," replied
"You won't be long?"

five minutes," answered his friend, as he
ito the gates; whilst Watson crossed the
ie little *restaurateur's* on the other side,

without perceiving Leighton, who had slipped behind a tree.

Meanwhile, Atherton proceeded with a swinging stride up the broad ride, where the horses for sale were usually paraded, till at the further extremity he turned to the left, and disappeared down a side-road; from which, however, in a few minutes, he re-issued, in company with another person. The place was so well lighted by lamps from the roof of the covered way, that thus much it was easy to discern, but not the features of the last-mentioned stranger, who appeared, however, to be a short, thick-set man, in a jockey-cut coat, with a small cane or riding-whip in his hand, with which

CHAPTER XXII.

UNDER the persuasion that Isabel had fled to Brighton, letters were written to Miss [illegible] animadverting severely on the romantic proceedings that had covered herself and her family with ridicule and disgrace; and at the same time requesting that the delinquent might be detained in a state of honourable captivity.

"Don't let her be seen," said Lady [illegible] "and don't allow her to leave your house till we arrive, which will be as soon as we can make arrangements for returning to England. It would be too disagreeable to appear here, after what has occurred. Georgina says she is not equal to

the journey at present, and the child is far from well; so that I suppose they will remain for some time longer.

"What we are to do with Bel, I really cannot conceive. After two such *esclandres*, it will be very unpleasant to take her into society; and as you live so entirely out of the world, I think, if you could keep her with you for a year or two, it would be the best arrangement for her and for us. She would be a companion to you, and I often think you must need one, especially when you are laid up with these rheumatic attacks, &c.

"P.S. By-the-bye, is Lord George Mandeville in England now? I remarked that he was very much struck with Bel the season she came out, and I think might have proposed, if he had received any encouragement, but she was so young; and it was reported, at that time, that his brother was getting better, and was going to marry Julia Vandeleur; which would have cut Lord George out of everything, you know."

Great was the amazement, when Miss Dacres' answer arrived, saying she had heard nothing whatever of the fugitive, and expressing considerable anxiety for her safety.

"I know Bel better than you do," she said; "and I believe her capable of taking a desperate resolution, under the pressure of circumstances—nay, Louisa, more, of committing a desperate act—and I am suffering agonies of anxiety, till I hear from you again. Poor, dear little Bel! If I were not chained to my sofa, I should start instantly for Paris; but, as it is, I must wait here with what patience I can. Would to God, she had taken refuge with me, as you suppose!"

"As for Lord George, I know nothing about him. I don't like him, nor ever did; and I think, whoever has the misfortune or the folly to marry him, will not live with him twelve months.

"If we find poor Isabel—my heart sinks, whilst write the words—but please God we have her ongst us again—do not, for Heaven's sake, ntrive any more matches for her. You know, have always told you, that what little I have, ll go to her. What does it signify, if she never arry at all?"

Could anything be more unpleasant? No doubt e mother and sisters were both grieved and larmed, but they were very angry too. In spite f every precaution that had been used to keep

the affair secret, some rumour of Isabel's
pearance had found its way into society; b
expectation of being able to *désorienter* the
quaintance, by simply saying she had been
by the advice of the medical man, to Brig
for change of air, had hitherto supported
through the mortification; but now, who
tell what was to follow? She might be
up out of the river some day, and be
lying in the Morgue. She might be there
for anything they knew. They wept at
thought of so dread a catastrophe, but they
deprecated the disagreeable position in which
would be placed by it; and, instead of del

expressed herself not at all surprised at the *dénouement*; but it was perfectly clear, that a young person, who had rendered herself so notorious in society, should never be produced in it again, and, as far as she was concerned, she avowed her determination to decline lending her countenance to such an attempt, should Lady Grosvenor think proper to make it.

"If she asks me to chaperone her daughter, I shall certainly decline."

It was just at this crisis that Leighton, in the pursuit of his vocation, namely, prowling about to see if anything would turn up, observed, as he passed down the Avenue de Neuilly, certain symptoms about the Hôtel de Breteuil indicating an approaching move.

"They're off," said he to himself, with a feeling of disappointment; for, although he had profited little by Mr. Grosvenor's presence in Paris, yet that little had come at such an opportune moment as augmented its value; because which, he had not relinquished the hope of convincing his former master of the injustice he had suffered, and the claim he had on his generosity.

If the family were going to England, it appeared to him that the best thing he could was to go also. But how was that to be managed, when he had no money? Perhaps Grosvenor might give him enough to take him there, if he represented his case; at all events it was an experiment worth trying: so he turned into a small *café* hard by, and expended his last five-sous piece in a *petit verre*, and the materials for writing a letter, wherein he told Lionel that he had done his utmost to discover Miss Crawfurd's retreat, and had sought her day and night without success. It was his opinion that she had returned to England, but that it was out of his power to follow her, as he was penniless and starving. He then reiterated the assertion of his innocence and unmerited sufferings, concluding with a petition for a sum sufficient to carry him back to London.

He was just stepping across the road with this letter in his hand, when he saw Mr. Grosvenor

e letter, followed them. When they reached
e Rue de la Paix, they stopped at a jeweller's
p, to make some purchases; during which in-
val, Leighton waited near the door till they
ie out, when they proceeded to the Boule-
ds, and with occasional pauses, to look at
thing or that, or have a chat with an ac-
intance, went on so far beyond the usual
ionable lounge, that it suddenly darted into
ghton's mind that they might be going to
same stable-keeper's, where, two evenings be-
, he had tracked Watson and Atherton; and
n he saw them actually turn in at the gate,
walk up the ride, he could not divest his
d of the suspicion, that the present visit was
some way connected with the former one, more
cially when he recalled Watson's remark, that
would not do for him to be seen in it."

They're going to jockey him about a horse,"
ght he. It was a thing very much in Ather-
line, and therefore probable; and Leighton
ed he could earn his late master's good-will
timely warning. However, he resolved to
and see the issue; and by-and-by a groom
ared, mounted on a magnificent black hunter,

which he rode up and down, and displayed to the greatest advantage; whilst the two gentlemen stood by, accompanied by the same man Leighton had seen on the previous occasion, who seemed to be signalising the horse's points, and expatiating on his qualities.

Leighton stood near the gate, and eyed the horse curiously every time he came to that end of the ride. He knew something about horses, for in his boyhood he had been a groom himself, and he thought he had never seen a finer animal.

"They'll make them pay a long price for him," said he to himself; "but, by Jove! he's worth it. He'll be a right one to go. How he steps out!"

And he wondered what interest Atherton could have in the sale; for such a horse, of late years, he was not likely to have possessed.

By-and-by, when the animal had been duly exhibited by the groom, Mr. Grosvenor mounted him himself. He was a notoriously bad rider, but he thought himself a good one; and whenever he could not manage a horse, he always lost his temper. They used to say of him at Oxford, that he made the beast's hide smart for his own

rounded vanity. The black horse went very
uietly, however, and Lionel stooped forward, and
atted him on the shoulder. Just then, a man,
ith a woman by his side, stopped to observe
hat was going on; and presently, in answer to
me remark of his, Leighton heard her say:

"Pooh! nonsense. How should you know
n?"

"Lord love you! not know him!" responded
man. "If it aren't him, my name's not
m Patton. I know'd the horse in Dublin as
ll as I know'd myself."

"He's an uncommon fine animal," said Leighton,
erving the speaker wore the dress of an English
om.

"He's a good 'un to look at," answered the
n.

"And a good 'un to go, I should think," re-
ned Leighton.

"Ay, if it's the horse I take him for, he'll go
h the best on 'em," answered the stranger.

"They'll be asking a long price for him," said
ghton.

"Ay, no doubt," replied the groom, who deli-
ed himself with a certain sententiousness, that

seemed to imply he knew more than he said; least, so it struck Leighton.

"But he'll be worth it, if he's sound?" he turned, interrogatively.

"He's sound enough, I take it," answered man. "Who's that 'ere chap that's a-riding him?"

"Mr. Grosvenor, son of Sir Francis G venor."

"Come along," said the woman, who was h ing on the man's arm, and who was probably wife—for he took no notice of what she sai "I don't believe it's Mr. Luttrell's horse, more than the horse in that 'ere shay is," a she, with a contemptuous tone.

"You've seen the horse before?" said Leight

"Not he," said the woman. "He know more about the horse than I do."

"I wish I'd a hundred pound upon it, swered the man. "I see him many a when he was at Dycer's, in Dublin."

"I wonder who he belongs to?" said ton.

The man shook his head, and said h know.

"Twig his eye," said he, presently, as the rse passed near them; and Leighton observed animal turning back the ball of his eye, there was scarcely anything visible but the ite.

"Is he vicious?" inquired he.

"Can't say?" answered the man. "Is that your master on his back?"

"No," answered Leighton. "I'm out of situation at present; I wish I could find ."

"Gentleman's servant, I s'pose?"

"Yes," answered Leighton.

"I heard Mr. Jerningham's valet's a-going to ve. They're at the Hôtel Windsor," said the anger.

"Is he?" said Leighton, with a sinking of heart; for what was it to him, if every valet Paris left his situation? He could not hope get one.

"Won't you never come along?" said the man peevishly, tugging her husband's arm; d as Lionel had dismounted at the other end the ride, and the horse was led away, the terest of the scene having subsided, the un-

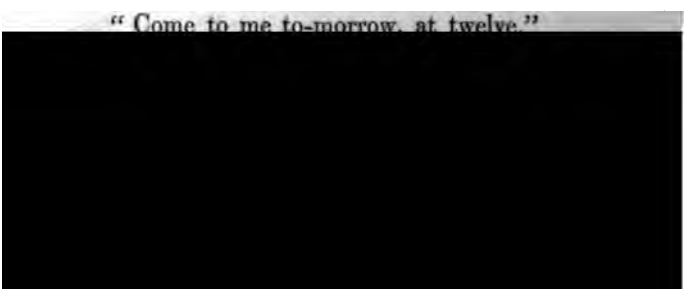
courteous invitation was complied with, and they trudged off in the direction of the Porte St Denis.

A conference of some length ensued between the two gentlemen and the livery-stable keeper, and when Mr. Grosvenor and his friend came away, Leighton had no idea whether they had bought the horse or not; and indeed his interest in the question being superseded by his anxiety regarding his own affairs, he ceased to think about it. As Lionel passed, he touched his hat.

"Have you anything to say to me?" inquired the former, significantly, but without quitting his friend's arm.

"Yes, Sir," answered Leighton, on the spur of the moment; aware that he had nothing to say that would be welcome, but desirous of procuring an interview that might benefit himself.

"Come to me to-morrow, at twelve."



gentlemen walked away, Leighton did not know what in the world to do with himself. It was the first day that he had been actually penniless; for hitherto, when he had no money, he had lived upon his clothes; but now, except the suit he wore, he had not an article left to dispose of; so he lounged along the Boulevards, as far as the Porte St. Martin, and as he was standing still, looking at the arch, he saw the groom and his wife crossing the street towards him. The man was carrying a bundle, and the woman had a sickly, dirty child in her arms. Her face looked very red and very angry, and she was talking vehemently; insomuch that, engrossed with her own affair, whatever it was, she did not recognise Leighton; but the man, who seemed to be listening to her objurgations with a sort of tough endurance, as if he was used to that sort of thing, said; and probably, to make a diversion, and escape the clatter of her tongue, he saluted him, and inquired whether "that 'ere gen'leman" had bought the horse?

Leighton said he did not know, adding: "I don't think you've a good opinion of the animal."

"He don't know nothing about him," said the woman, who seemed to be bent on contradicting and undervaluing her husband.

"Well, maybe, I don't," said the man; "but if that 'ere horse is not Firebrass, I never see him—that's all."

"You think he's a horse that belonged to Mr. Luttrell," said Leighton, recurring to his former notion of obtaining some information that might be useful to himself.

"I'm a'most sure of it," answered the man. "If it's the horse I mean, he gave three hundred guineas for him. He was then just rising six, and he sold him, ten days afterwards, for an old song.

the devil himself couldn't unseat him; so that when Firebrass found he stuck to him, what did he do but run him up agen the rails, and jammed his knee to a perfect smash."

"But he seems very quiet now," said Leighton.

"So he did when Mr. Luttrell bought him, I fancy," answered the groom. "There's tricks in all trades, you know. But I minded his eye just now, and the twist of his nostrils, and I wouldn't trust him."

"If it's the horse you mean, I wonder how he came here?" said Leighton.

"They couldn't get their money for him in England, I take it; and somebody's brought him over on a spec."

Leighton thought it a very likely thing for Atherton to do; and moreover that, without telling Mr. Watson his character, he had got him to recommend the horse to his cousin.

Conversing in this manner, they continued walking side by side, the wife stumping along with an irritated air, as if she was displeased at her husband's attending to anything but herself. Nevertheless, she spoke tenderly to the

child; and Leighton learned that whilst they accompanied their master and mistress to the country, they had placed it at nurse with a woman who neglected it; in consequence of which, they had been to fetch it away; and they were going to the English chemist's, in the Place Vendôme, to ask him to give it *some stuff*.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LEIGHTON had scarcely an acquaintance in Paris. There were several English servants there, whom he had known at one time or other; but he had met with so many unpleasant rebuffs, that experience taught him to claim no fellowship with the prosperous section of the commonalty. The invitation of Tom Patton, therefore, "to go in and take a glass of something," was readily accepted. Tom's residence was situated over the coach-house in the court of a large hotel, inhabited by his employer, who was not yet returned from the country, whence the groom had arrived only a day or two before.

Tom produced a bottle of brandy, saying he could not drink their sour wine and he did not like their beer, whilst the woman took some bread and butter out of a cupboard for the child, who had evidently been kept short of food. Leighton had not swallowed a mouthful of anything that day but the *petit verre* of *eau-de-vie* and a roll when he wrote his letter, and longed for a bit of the child's bread and butter; but the woman took no notice of him, and seemed so cross, that he did not like to ask her for any. Whilst they sat sipping their dram, Tom asked Leighton how long he had been out of a situation. Leighton cleared his throat, for it was an awkward question, and answered:

"Upwards of four years."

Of course he might have named a shorter time, and so avoided the dilemma, but he was not remarkable for presence of mind, and his first impulse was generally to speak the truth, though he could deviate from it without any very incon-

," answered Leighton.
as you with last?" inquired Tom; and
old him it was the gentleman he had
livery stables.
ith is," he added, "I have been unfor-
I wanted to see if he wouldn't do some-
lp me."
d you speak to him?"
lid; and I'm to go to him to-morrow at

f you can, give him a wink not to meddle
re horse—only don't say as you had it
or the owners on him may have me up
y words. It ought to be as good as a
ur pocket."
: won't believe me. He thinks himself
ge of horses."
tell him to find out who the horse
and who brought him over here."
: his life once already," said Leighton,
st tossed off a second glass of Tom's
d was getting communicative, "but I
ll not have done it, for it only brought
able." And his host inquiring how that
, Leighton, partly moved by the effect

of the liquor on an empty stomach, and par
a feeling that it was better he should tell his
himself than that his new acquaintance should
it from anybody else, related the circumstance
had reduced him from the enviable position
gentleman's gentleman, to a penniless, half-sta
pauper.

Tom listened with attention, twisting his mou
about the while, as if he was rubbing down a hor
and his wife, who had been before wholly engros
with the puling child coaxed it into quietne
whilst she also lent an ear to the tale. From th
demeanour it appeared that Leighton had ac
wisely, and that his confidence had made a favo

"Very like," answered Tom: "was there much property carried away?"

"Not an article," returned Leighton. "Whether they heard me stirring overhead, or what, I can't say; but they were off before I could get down stairs;" and here he related the evidence that Agnes had given at the trial, with respect to the appearance of the person she had seen; adding that it had done him no good, for that her being there at supper alone with his master had discredited her character so much, that they did not believe a word she said; "and yet she was a very respectable young woman, for all that!" said he.

During this conversation the woman had been moving quietly about the room; and presently she spread a cloth on the table and produced some bread and butter and cheese, and a bit of German sausage, of which she invited Leighton to partake; observing that "as times was bad with him, a mouthful of food mightn't come amiss." He had thought her a terrible harpy at first, and had pitied the honest man that had got her, and she was certainly a bit of a virago to Tom; but she had a soft corner in her heart for the unfortunate; and as she fully believed Leighton's story, as anybody

would who had heard him then and there relate it, she was moved to compassion by his hollow cheeks and dejected appearance. Being a woman of an energetic temperament too, she felt indignant at the injustice the man was suffering.

"It was a burning shame," she said, "for a poor servant to be thrown out of his bread for a thing he'd never done;" and she advised him to speak strongly to Mr. Grosvenor about it; and perhaps if Leighton had had such a wife, the vehemence of her representations might have had its effect. At all events, when the forlorn outcast took his leave, he felt all the better of the bread and cheese and sympathy, gladly promising to call again and let them know the result of his interview with Mr. Grosvenor.

In the meantime, he thought he might as well fill up the interval by ascertaining what Watson and his crony were about; which, knowing their hour of dinner and the *salons* they chiefly frequented, was not impossible. If they were really concerned in the sale of the horse, they would very likely pay another visit to the livery stables at an hour when nobody else was likely to be there, and for the convenience of being in the neighbourhood,

dine where they had dined on the previous day, instead of at the Palais Royal. So he strolled in that direction, and having taken up a convenient position for watching the entrance, he had in due time the satisfaction of seeing them arrive. They placed themselves at the same table as before, and after dining in the most enviable manner, he saw them issue from the door and proceed straight to Corbillon's, where they staid upwards of half an hour. When they reappeared, the same person was in conversation with them, and Leighton had now no doubt whatever, that there was a plot amongst them to do Mr. Grosvenor out of a large price for a horse that was worse than valueless.

The large hotel, inhabited by the Ravenscliffe family, had been divided amongst the various branches of it; Lionel and his wife occupying the *premier* or first floor, the *piano nobile*, as the Italians call it, because Lady Georgina objected to the fatigue of ascending the stairs any higher. The rest of the family were gone now, and when Leighton arrived to keep his appointment, he saw a board up announcing that there were *appartements à louer présentement*. As he had been several times abroad, he could speak French enough for common

purposes; and after ascertaining that Mr. Grosvenor was at home, he inquired when the family were to leave. "They were all gone," the porter answered, "excepting Monsieur le fils, et la jeune Miluli;" adding that the *disparition* of the *demoiselle* was a sad affair, and he did not wonder they were glad to get away; but Leighton, knowing nothing of the circumstances connected with Isabel and her misfortunes, did not understand what he said, wanting the key to the allusion.

Mr. Grosvenor was still in his dressing-room, and having dismissed his valet, he inquired of Leighton what he had heard about Miss Crawford.

"I've not been able to hear anything, Sir," he answered, "though I've been through every part of the town; but I made bold to speak to you, hoping you'll be kind enough to give me a little assistance to help me back to England, for I can't find anything to do here, and I haven't earned a penny since what you were kind enough to give me, except a trifle Mr. Watson gave me."

This last addition was made on second thoughts, Watson himself might have mentioned that he had given him something; but whether or not, Leighton was not unwilling to be interrogated.

ionel, however, did not question him, the cir-
stance of his cousin giving the man a trifle,
caring too unimportant to excite any cu-
ity.

'You want to return to England?" he said.

'Yes, Sir, I think I'd better. I don't know
t to do for the best, I'm sure."

'artly from a certain easiness of disposition,
ch, as it acted more often injuriously than
eficially, I may denominate weakness; and
ly from a lurking suspicion that the man had
wronged, all resentment against Leighton had
shed by this time, and Lionel felt some com-
ion for his miserable half-starved petitioner;
nuch that he would have been glad to have
:d him to some way of earning his livelihood.
:onscience was not very sensitive, but it is no
thing to be the means, though unintentionally
asting an innocent person's life, or of taking
read out of the mouth of a defenceless fellow-
ure.

I don't see very well how I can help you,"
aid, after a moment's reflection. "I may
you a trifle to get you to England, but what
you do when you're there?"

"I can't say, I'm sure, Sir; I can't expect to get a situation;" answered Leighton, drawing out a ragged red cotton pocket-handkerchief, and wiping the tears that, at the thought of his miserable situation, started to his eyes.

"Well," said Lionel, "if you wish to go to England, I'll give you something to take you there, but on the whole I incline to think you have a better chance of getting employment here. Wait a few days till I make some inquiries," he said, taking a handful of silver off the table, and giving it to him: "is there anything you can do besides being a servant?"

"I can write a good hand, Sir."

"I recollect. Well, call again some day next week, and I'll see what can be done."

This was a dismissal, and Leighton turned to go, but as he placed his hand upon the handle of the door, he remembered what Tom Patton had said, and feeling grateful for the relief afforded him, and desirous of entitling himself to further

"What do you mean?" inquired Mr. Grosvenor.

"I'm afraid he's not safe, Sir. I understand nobody can ride him."

"I'll ride him, I'll answer for it!" said Lionel, with a self-confident air.

"He rears till he get's people off his back, I'm told, Sir; nobody can sit him."

"He won't get me off, I promise him," answered Lionel, drily.

"I thought so," said Leighton to himself, as he left the room. "I knew it would be of no use. It'll only make him the more determined to have him."

And he was right, such being the usual effect of lvice. that wounds the susceptible side of our nity.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"DON'T call me '*ma'am,*' Agnes! You know I can't bear it!" said Isabel, one day to her friend,

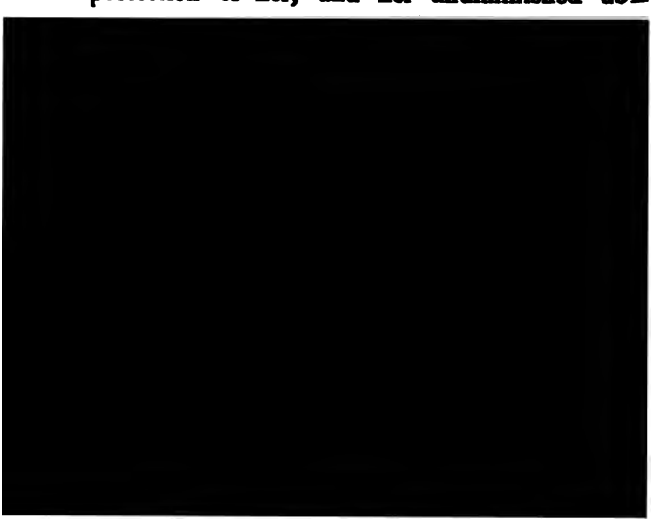
ed, seemed unattainable. If an attempt were
, as was occasionally the case, it did not last;
was always a sudden recurrence to the respect-
eserve.

the meantime, Isabel was daily gaining strength
health, a circumstance that, on the whole,
d her more anxiety than pleasure. As long as
was unable to move, she felt that she was not
l upon to do anything, not even to form a
ion. All she had to do, or could do, was to
assive and allow herself to be nursed and
ished; nursed by Agnes, and cherished by
rick Capel, who sometimes neglected even his
and forgot his diagrams, to sit beside her on
ofa, and read volumes of love in those soft
yes, which continually discoursed the tenderest
s without the owner of them in the least sus-
ig it.

ring her convalescence, she read with de-
the books he brought her, to facilitate her
standing of the subjects to which his mind
most devoted; and here, in this poor apart-
of the Rue Joubert, Isabel would have been
r than she had ever been in her life, could
ave snapped the chain that united her to

the past, and been free to plunge, a liberat soul, into the future; but the past embarrasse and the future terrified her. She had forfeit her position in society, but this, in itself, occ sioned her little sorrow, since circumstances h rendered that position a more fertile source pain than pleasure. She had irrecoverably fended and alienated her family; she knew th could be no cordial forgiveness expected the and, above all, she had seriously compromi her reputation. This formed the greatest em rassment of all.

Although the new feelings that were tak possession of her, and her undiminished ab



and unaccountable, so apparently impossible, that she sometimes could not believe it had happened at all, and asked herself if it was not a dream—a nightmare—such as most people are occasionally subject to, wherein we fancy ourselves entering a room full of company, or walking about a crowded city attired like our mother Eve, complacently at first, and only gradually awakening to the horror of our situation.

Nothing indeed could account for it, but that which she herself could no longer recal or estimate, namely, an excitement of mind bordering on insanity. If she had drowned herself, as she intended to do, that would have been the verdict of a British jury, and a just one.

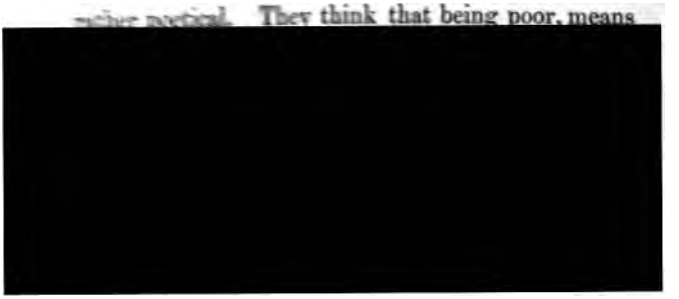
Even Agnes was bewildered, when she looked at her visitor, and contemplated the extraordinary discordance betwixt what should have been and what was. She was astonished at "the heavy declension;" her own calmer nature and less poignant sensations, rendering it difficult to comprehend the violent emotions and acute sensibilities developed in delicate organizations, by a life of high nurture and over-refinement.

But Frederick Capel understood perfectly that

which was dark to Agnes, for he was learned in all subtleties of human dealing; and it would have spared Isabel many a pang of shame and anguish could she have known earlier how well his wife sympathies interpreted for her.

But all these shames and anxieties were the mere preliminaries: the main business of the drama was to decide on what she should do. It was a question, however, which, for various reasons, neither Agnes nor Mr. Capel ever introduced; Agnes forbearing, from motives of delicacy, lest it should appear that she wished to get rid of her; and Frederick eschewing the subject, because he dreaded to learn what her projects for the future were, fearing that, be they what they might, the inevitable result to him would be, to lose sight of her for ever.

Young ladies, as I have elsewhere observed, are apt to have very obscure notions about money matters, and their ideas of poverty are generally rather poetical. They think that being poor, means



obliged to do without. Having *no* money, is hing they have no conception of. Thus, it er entered Isabel's head that Agnes's re- ces were so limited, that this detention in s, and the extra expenses incurred for her- were fast exhausting them. The services that s performed for her, the hospitable shelter, the careful nursing and tending, Isabel fully ciated; but the cost did not strike her as tter worthy of consideration; in fact, she thought of it, or, if she did, it was as of bligation to be returned in kind, hereafter; she had no more notion of anything like poverty awaiting herself, than she had of s's empty pockets.

e was aware that she should henceforth not a carriage to ride in, nor live in such hand- suites of apartments, as she had been accus- d to; but she had not the slightest con- on of what people earned by teaching, nor e sum indispensable to a decent mainte- .

e knew something of the prices of white shoes and Houbigant's gloves, but that was Everything else went to the Christmas bills,

which she never saw or heard of. To have alluded to the expenses incurred for the little—the very little she had had—would have appeared to her not only absurd, but insulting. What was it indeed but a chicken or a *potage*, and, when Monsieur Emile recommended it, a glass of Bordeaux!

But this difficulty, unseen and unsuspected by the guest, was occasioning the most serious uneasiness to the hostess, who had not only expended the money she had set apart to carry her back to England, but also as much as she could raise upon every article of dress belonging to herself that she could dispense with. To ob-

e observed the lamp burning; and drawing aside
e drapery that shaded the head of the bed,
e was surprised to see Agnes, with the needle
her hand, working as if her existence de-
nded on finishing the job.

"My dear Agnes, why do you slave in such
way at that tiresome muslin? You'll work
urself blind," said she. "Are the people in
h a hurry for it?" for she was aware that the
k was bespoken.

Yes," answered Agnes, "I am obliged to get it
e as soon as possible."

Then I'll get up and help you."

Oh, no, no; pray don't. You'll get cold, and
ll again," returned Agnes.

Then you must come to bed, for I can't lie
sleeping comfortably, and know you are slaving
rself to death."

I will presently, if you will go to sleep. I only
t to finish this bunch of flowers."

Well, then, promise me you'll come to bed
n that is done."

I will indeed," said Agnes; and Isabel turned
nd, and fell asleep; but the next morning, as
n as she was dressed, she asked for a breadth of



Whilst they were thu
a ring at the bell, anc
a man appeared with a p
he was the *propriétaire,*
for the *loyer,* which had
to the *concierge.* On lea
stepped out, and attem
behind her, in order tha
the conversation; but th
insolence of *propriétaires*
pushed it back, and ent
about the room with a c
as if he expected to finc
missing.

"You shall have the m
Agnes, in a low voice, and
could command.

"You told the *conciera*

man, wagging his head, and striking his stick against the floor.

"Can't you pay him, Agnes?" inquired Isabel amazed and frightened.

"I have not the money," answered Agnes in English, "but I hope this work will be finished by Monday, and then I shall be able to pay it."

Isabel was thunderstruck, and asked how much it was.

"I owe him twenty francs," returned Agnes; whereupon the other rose, and opening the drawer of an antique-looking, broken-down chiffonier, that stood in one corner of the room, she took from it a magnificent ring which she had had on her finger on the night of her flight.

"Voilà!" said she, "take that to a jeweller's and sell it for me, and then we'll pay you the money!" but when the man saw what it was she was offering him, he drew back his hand at first with a look of astonishment; but suddenly the idea that they were cheating him darting into his mind, he took hold of the ring and examined it more closely.

"Are they real?" said he.

"Mais, sans doute!" returned Isabel.

"Bien done," said he, returning it, whi
eyed them with suspicion; "sell it yoursel
pay me."

"I had rather you would sell it," answered

"C'est possible," said he, with somewhat
sneer. "mais je m'en lave les mains. Pay
rent, that is all I require."

"Very well, then, call to-morrow, and you
have it," answered Isabel, with hauteur—f
was indignant at the man's insolence. He s
would, and departed; but as he descende
stairs, he stopped to warn Barbara and her
to look well after their lodgers and watch tha
did not decamp in his debt. "There are

when I opened the gate—for Pierre had a cold and I wouldn't let him get up, though he wanted to do it—what should I see but Monsieur Capel avec cette petite dame. Ma foi, j'étais toute ébahie, vous pensez bien !"

"Et puis?" said the *propriétaire*, whose name was Bellon.

"Well, they went up stairs, and he wasn't gone five minutes before he came down and went out again."

"C'est quelque femme de théâtre," said M. Bellon.

"Monsieur Capel said she was a friend of l'anglaise au quatrième; et cela peut être, car elle a fait une maladie affreuse, et l'autre l'a soignée comme si c'était sa sœur," said Barbara.

"Enfin, il faut payer le loyer," said Monsieur Bellon, shaking his chin with an air of decision as he took his departure.

In the meantime, Isabel and Agnes were engaged up stairs in a discussion not less interesting.

"Why, my dear Agnes, didn't you tell me how you were situated?"

"I knew I could get enough to go on with as soon as this dress was finished," answered Agnes,

"and I didn't wish to trouble you about m
things."

"But I must learn to trouble myself about t
things. However, it is fortunate we are
without resources. How shall we dispose of
ring?"

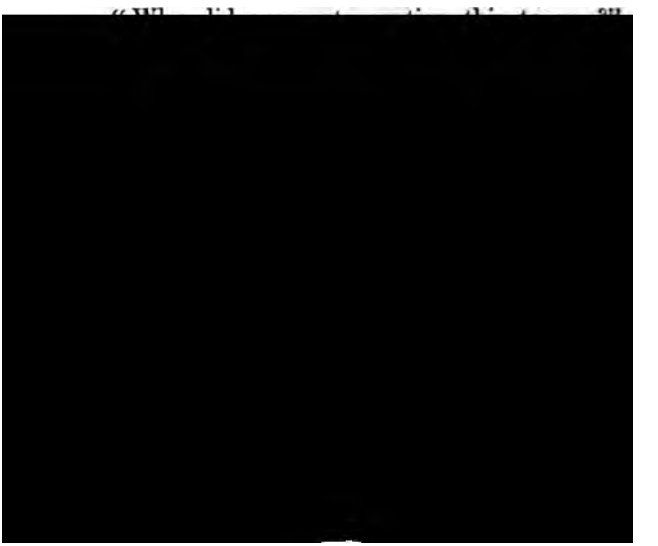
"Suppose we ask Mr. Capel to do it for
but Isabel felt a repugnance to making him
quainted with their embarrassments. Neverth
as Agnes's imperfect knowledge of the city a
the language would expose her to the dang
being cheated, they saw no other course to
Still Isabel felt terribly shame-faced about i
was such a strange commission to give him

at Agnes that said, "Spare me! don't mention it now!" He sat down beside her on the sofa and began to discourse his eloquent music; the melodious voice, the command of language, the grasp of thought and the rich illustrations, made it so. "Sweeter than singing" was that talk to her. He was in a particularly happy vein too, and she hung upon his words with fond enthusiasm as he spoke of some late astronomical discoveries, and dilated on the new views they opened with regard to the possible achievements of future science. He was in great spirits, for these were the things that elated him and made him happy, so dearly he loved nature. To interpret the works of the Creator was man's business on earth—the best thing worth living for—so he had thought till he saw Isabel—but life had a second object now; a new and entrancing delight that divided his heart with its first idol. Isabel thought he had never been so charming, and as she looked into those deep, dark eyes she drank long draughts of love. He paid an unusually long visit because, he said, he should not see them again that evening; he had business that would detain him late. When he left them, Agnes, with the ring in her hand, followed him up stairs,

and asked if he would do them the favour
dispose of it for them. He looked at the jew
with admiration, remarking they were very fi
stones and that the ring must be worth a co
siderable sum.

"I don't know who to take it to, one m
be easily cheated in such a transaction," he sa
"I must inquire for some honest jeweller befor
venture to part with it. I think I know
person that can advise me and I'll call on h
to-morrow."

But Agnes explained that that would not s
them, as they were entirely without money and t
propriétaire impatient for his rent.



of seeing how much it was, but it was in reality for the pleasure of looking at it and holding it in her hand. A pile of burnished gold would have appeared of less value than those few dingy five-franc pieces. What a pity it would be to give any of them to that horrid Monsieur Bellon.

They had nothing more to expect that day, as their friend was engaged, so they worked away at the muslin; and Isabel said she did not think it was at all disagreeable to be obliged to work. "Generally," she said, "one has no object in what one does. I think I could work hard for my living."

"It's very well if one is not obliged to work too hard; but I was much happier when I was obliged to do something in London, than I used to be at home; besides, then I had my boy to work for, and that made work so pleasant."

They often talked of the child, that being the subject ever uppermost in Agnes's mind. Of Mr. Capel, as if by mutual agreement, they never spoke; that is, they never praised him or discussed his merits; each had a consciousness that sealed her lips.



[illegible] and w
[illegible] He
[illegible] and
[illegible] she thought she
[illegible] about her own
[illegible] would be a pleasu
[illegible] was a pleasure that b
[illegible]

[illegible] following day, betwixt o
[illegible] ring at the bell; the m
[illegible]

[illegible] said the ring?" said

[illegible] your coin was fair?"

[illegible] "Take your money."

[illegible] examining the silver, he left th

"What a horrid man," said she,
[illegible] to be subject to the insol

Capel has not called about the ring. Don't you ?"

It was not the ring, but himself she was thinking of. It was now four o'clock, and both had been occupied with the same subject for some time. Agnes worked on; she had been used to work under the pressure of anxiety, but Isabel's fingers slackened, and at length she gave in.

"It's very odd Mr. Capel does not call about the ring, is it not ?"

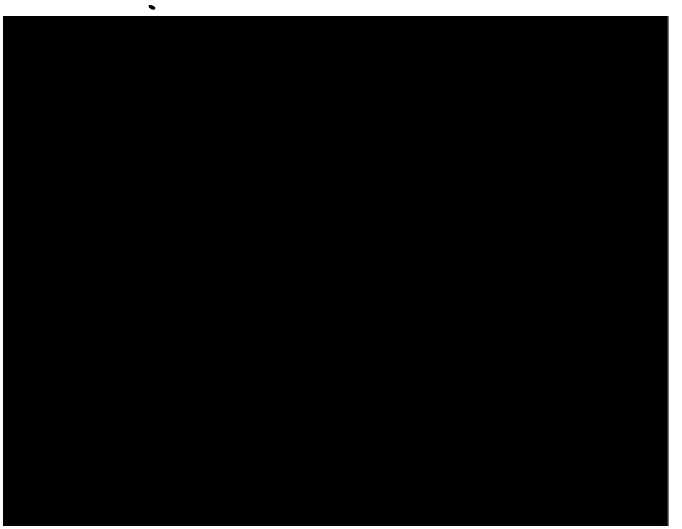
Agnes thought it was, but she wished to affect indifference, and answered that she dare say he would come by-and-by.

But hour after hour passed, and he did not come. He had told Isabel on parting, that he should be with them, without fail, that evening, and the commission was an additional motive to bring him. Yet he came not. Nine, ten, eleven, twelve o'clock, and no Mr. Capel.

"Agnes, do just run up stairs, and see if he is in his room. I hope nothing has happened to him."

Agnes went willingly, and rang, but no one answered. Then she went below and inquired if

Barbara had seen him. Barbara was in bed, in the little hole in the wainscoting, that Mr. Capel had described, and Pierre, in his red night-cap, by her side; but she put out her head, and said Monsieur Capel had gone out yesterday, and she had not seen him since.



THE

ADVENTURES OF A BEAUTY.

BY CATHERINE CROWE.

AUTHOR OF

"SUSAN HOPLEY," "THE STORY OF LILLY DAWSON,"
"THE NIGHTSIDE OF NATURE," &c., &c.

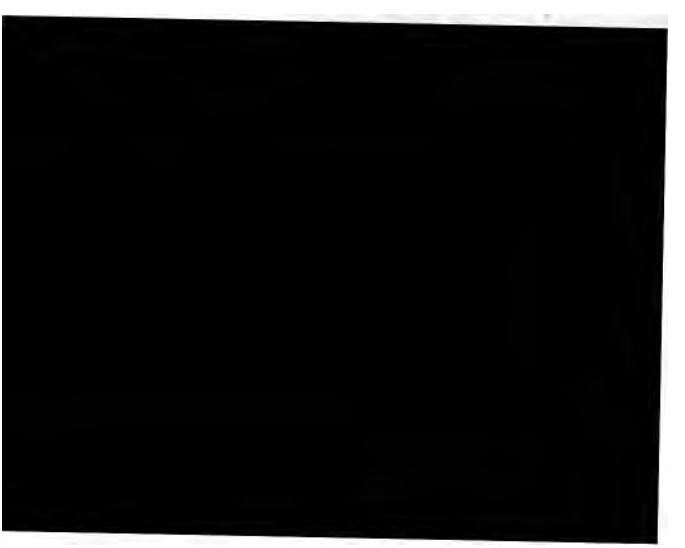
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THE

ADVENTURES OF A BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

It was some time before Isabel fell asleep that night, but she slept at last; and when she woke in the morning, she wondered why she had been so anxious on the previous evening, since, on reflection, there was certainly nothing very extraordinary in Mr. Capel's absence. He had promised they should see him, it is true; but he had also mentioned that he had an engagement on business, and this might have detained him. Besides, he had no reason to suppose that his non-appearance would occasion any uneasiness; and by lending them the money, he had guarded against its

causing them any inconvenience. Without doub
he would arrive to-day; so she rose with
alert spirit, and when she had taken her brea
fast, set herself with alacrity to the embroide
again. Whilst she was full of hope, she cou
work; and she did so with the more pleasu
that she fancied he would approve of her doi
so.

"Nobody should be above work," she h
heard him say; and she was learning, fr
him, to think it a nobler thing to labour, th
to live on the labour of others. It is not nec
sary that everybody should till or dig, but ev
should work.

notions soc

ociating with another, without knowing who was.

"His papa is a gentleman," answered the child.

"How do you know?" said the father.

"Because he never does anything," was the wer.

So Isabel stitched away diligently, and sprig and wer grew fast under her agile fingers; but time ved on, and by-and-by the fingers began to cken; as her heart grew heavy, so did her nd.

Both occupied with the same thought, there l been little conversation betwixt the two young men: what there was, related to their future ns. Agnes wished to return to England: she st rejoin her sister. Perhaps it cost her a g to go, but her place was London, on all unts. It was not fair to leave Martha, who so devotedly followed her fortunes, to fight way alone; and since there was no chance of vering her child through Lionel, the spot nce he disappeared seemed the most likely one hear of him again. Moreover, against the n it cost her to part with Mr. Capel, she had balance that she suffered in being near him

now obliged to witness the growing attachm
between him and Isabel, the first germs of wh
she observed before they themselves were c
aware of their existence. Jealousy has a hund
eyes to discern what is, and a magic glass t
shows her what is not.

Agnes knew, besides, that whatever he had c
for a moment, Mr. Capel thought no mor
her now. She knew that she was nothing to
but the friend and hostess of the woman he lo
Her beauty, even, though in reality much the s
remarkable of the two, had faded before the
fresh charm he had found in Isabel's face—t

tressing involvement. That she cared the least about him, he never suspected; her *posée* manner and habitual self-control completely deceived him.

Isabel, on the contrary, was most averse to leaving Paris on every account. She would have preferred to launch into her new life there, where she was less likely to be known; and how that new life was to be carried on without Mr. Capel to sustain it, she could not conceive; his visits seemed such an indispensable part of the plan. Still the separating from Agnes entailed many inconveniences. Agnes's experience would be so useful to her; she had no idea, indeed, how she could manage matters alone.

No doubt, Agnes was not all she could have wished. In essential matters, she was kind and good, but it was impossible to make her cordial and familiar; and Isabel, who never penetrated the jealousy, attributed this reserve and distance to an inconvenient sense of the difference of their conditions. No doubt, this had its effect; but the repelling element was the jealousy.

It appeared, therefore, that if Agnes persisted in going to England, she must go too; but the mo-

[illegible] necessity presented itself, her cour[illegible] fail. All the fortitude and resolution with wh[illegible] she thought she was prepared to encounter t[illegible] turned future, seemed to be somehow or othe[illegible] intimately connected with the student, *au cinquiè*[illegible] that whenever he disappeared from the sch[illegible] she could not see her way at all; she felt q[illegible] perplexed and bewildered. In short, it was to[illegible] apprehended that he was the main support of[illegible] scaffolding, which fell to the ground as soon as[illegible] was withdrawn.

Of course, all these embarrassments furnis[illegible] matter enough for thinking; and the more[illegible] that neither could fully unbosom herself to[illegible] other; but as hour after hour slipped by,[illegible] anxiety for the future began to give way to[illegible] more urgent and immediate. Isabel was again[illegible] first to break silence.

"Agnes, don't you think it very strange? W[illegible] can be become of Mr. Capel? He never s[illegible] away so long before."

"Do. I really begin to be quite uneasy; don't you?"

"It's really very extraordinary," said Agnes, as she left the room.

"Well?" said Isabel, anxiously, when she returned.

"He is not there, and Barbara says he has never come in."

"Good heavens! I am certain something dreadful has happened to him," exclaimed Isabel, in great agitation. "Do you know any of his friends, that we could send to?"

"Not a soul, except Monsieur Emile; and I don't know where he lives."

This being the case, they were obliged to sit still, and bear their suspense as well as they could. Agnes was surprised and anxious, but Isabel's distress was so great, that if her companion had not already read her secret, this agitation would have betrayed it.

That she might not retard her convalescence, the invalid had been desired to go to bed early, and she had hitherto done it; but to-night, when Agnes began to make the usual preparations, she begged for a little indulgence. "I feel so uneasy;

I am sure I can't sleep." She was still listening, and unconsciously hoping; but when twelve o'clock came she felt herself obliged to yield to Agnes's entreaties, although she would much rather have sat up all night.

Agnes she lay awake till nearly morning; but when she awoke this time it was to an immediate sense of alarm for her friend. However, she was eager to be up and dressed, in case he should come; but now she would not admit hope. She was sure something had happened to him—he would not come. And so it proved. The day passed, and no Mr. Lovel appeared.

There seemed now really cause for alarm; but Barbara said there was no accounting for the whims and freaks of *ces jeunes gens*; and that she dare say he would come by-and-by. At the same time, she admitted that he had never been



But the young women were neither convinced
r consoled. They knew that when he was absent
night he was at the Observatoire; so he had told
m, and they believed him entirely. What to do
y knew not. Their only hope was that Monsieur
ile would call, but having ceased to see his
ent medically, his visits were quite uncertain.
That added greatly to Isabel's distress, was the
ehension that the ring might have brought Mr.
l into danger. Some dishonest person had
aps seen him in possession of it, and perceiving
alue, had murdered him to obtain it. She had
l her brother talk of the dangerous classes in
, and of the localities they inhabit, and how
le had been reported to have disappeared in a
erious manner, no doubt being entertained
they had fallen victims to some of these
rate wretches.

Do put away that muslin, Agnes. What is the
f slaving in that manner! It quite worries
o see you do it!—" for, however disturbed,
s kept toiling on, as people accustomed to get
living learn to do; whilst Isabel, restless and
ed, could do nothing but walk up and down
om.

[redacted]

[redacted] were you ever at [redacted]

[redacted] what is the Morgue [redacted]

[redacted] where persons are taken that h[redacted] [redacted] in the Quai, near [redacted] [redacted] We came to Pa[redacted] [redacted]—and so did I; and I [redacted]

[redacted] are dead bodies!"

[redacted] I may looked in; I had [redacted] but if I dare vent [redacted]

[redacted] shuddered and turned pale.

[redacted]

at the bell, and say you have a friend missing, and you wish to see—" here Isabel's voice failed her, and she could not proceed in her instructions. Agnes laid down her work and prepared herself for the expedition; whilst Isabel, having raised up this image of horror for herself, gave way to a fresh access of grief.

Agnes's feelings were by no means so vivid as her friend's, still, as she drove through the streets, her heart sank at the thought of what she might behold, and her limbs trembled when she stepped out of the coach at that door which had been entered by so many wretched beings, seeking what they feared to find. Confused by her terror, Agnes's French broke down when the man spoke to her.

"'Que voulez vous?" said he.

All she could stammer out was, "Un ami!"

"'Entrez!" he said, making way for her. "We have only one, *un Anglais*. He was brought in soon after daylight this morning. A woodcutter found him, who went early to work in the Bois de Boulogne. Apparemment, il est tombé de cheval."

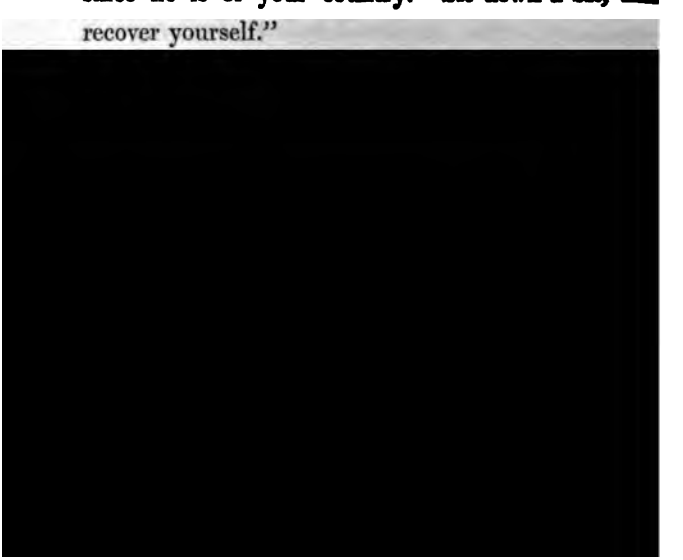
Agnes understood but imperfectly what was said, but the first glance showed her that the body that lay there was not Mr. Capel's; the hair was much

lighter, and seeing there were no more, she drew back; but the man, thinking she was retreating from terror, without accomplishing what she came for, took her by the arm, and led her forwards, bidding her not fear.

"N'ayez pas peur!" said he, "les morts ne font pas de mal. C'était un beau jeune homme. Est ce celui que vous cherchez?"

"Oh, God!" cried Agnes, suddenly putting her hands before her eyes to shut out the dreadful spectacle.

"Ah!" said the man, "c'est lui. I thought so since he is of your country. Sit down a bit, and recover yourself."



down for him, bidding him send notice without delay to the family, who could have no suspicion of what had happened, or the body would not be there.

When Agnes left the place, she stepped again into the coach, and bade the man drive her to the Tuilleries; there she dismissed him and entered the gardens; she needed a little time to compose herself before she met Isabel, and also to resolve on the line of conduct she should pursue; whether to communicate what she had seen or not. As she was sitting on one of the benches, with her head hanging down, absorbed in thought, a man passed her. She did not observe him, but he saw something about her that caused him to turn back and take a second look.

"Miss Crawfurd," said he. She raised her head; it was Leighton. "I have been looking for you ever so long," he said. "Mr. Grosvenor wants to speak to you. He told me he had got something very particular to say to you, and that you would be very glad to hear. You had better come along with me to him; I am going that way now."

"I have just seen him," she said, with pale and quivering lips. "He's dead, and his body is lying at the Morgue."

There was nobody on earth whose departure fro
[illegible] could have consoled Leighton half
[illegible]. The only person at once able, ar
[illegible] was gone. He could hard
[illegible] he feared Agnes must be mistaken
[illegible] speed for the Hôtel de Breteu
[illegible]. When he rang at the bel
[illegible] who opened the gate, looked
[illegible] and easy in his mind, that his hop
[illegible] being erroneous were strengt
[illegible].

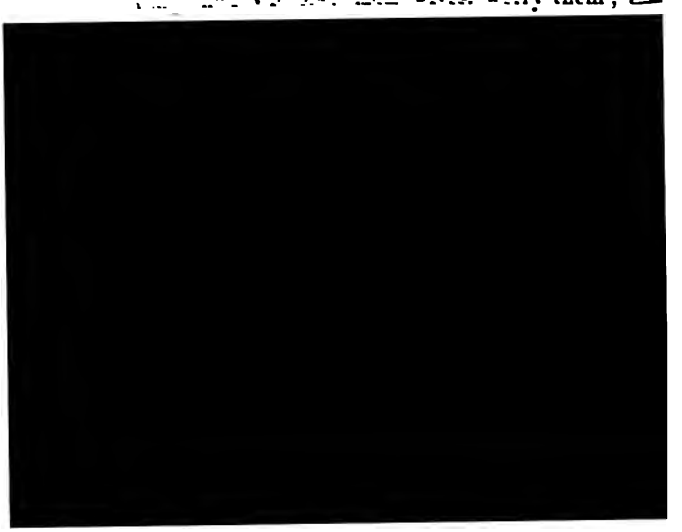
"Is Mr. Beaumont at home?" he said.

[illegible]

Leighton then related what he had heard; but the thing seemed so improbable, that the porter did not believe it; Mr. Grosvenor's absence being nothing at all unusual. He was often away all night, and sometimes two, and was on these occasions supposed to be out of town; but the quarrel with the groom accorded so well with what Leighton already knew, and with what the man at the Morgue had said to Agnes, that he feared the ill-news was but too true. They were yet discussing the matter at the gate, when the messenger arrived with the address in his hand that Agnes had written.

It appeared that the wood-cutter who had discovered the body, had given notice at the nearest police station; whereupon, the officers finding nothing about the person to indicate the name and address of the deceased, had conveyed his remains to the Morgue. When found, Lionel Grosvenor, for it was he indeed, was lying in the middle of the road, bedaubed with mud, his hat at a little distance, and his silver-mounted riding-whip a few yards behind; and from various circumstances, it was afterwards conjectured that he had dropped this whip, and had alighted to pick it up.

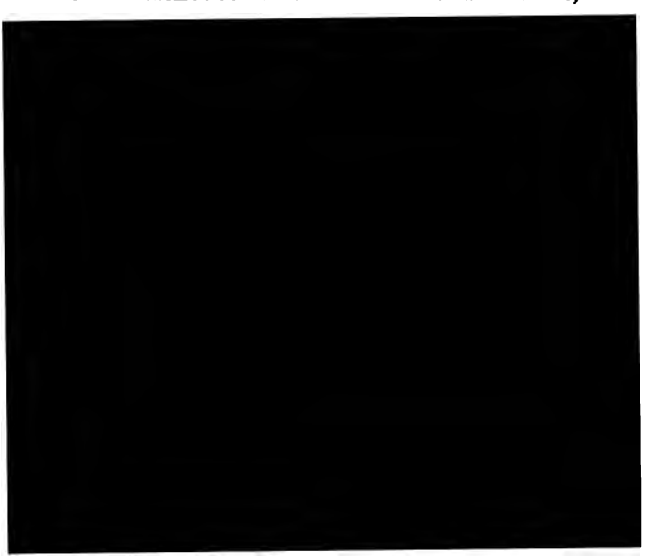
[redacted] was little sympathy betwixt the t[redacted] such a death as this softe[redacted] memories. and Mr. Damer was ve[redacted] of her when he heard what had happene[redacted] to make arrangements for the removal [redacted] and then drove back to the Hôtel d[redacted] communicate the sad news to Geo[redacted] There had been but a small modicum [redacted] between her and her husband—it com[redacted] to use—but there had been few quarre[redacted] were seldom together, and were too in[redacted] [redacted] irritable a couple to bick[redacted] which Lord was not ill-temper[redacted] [redacted] vex their wives, worry them;



her own infirmities, and the extreme delicacy of the child, she was perplexed with doubts and hesitations with regard to the prudence of undertaking the journey. To certain people, their children acquire additional interest and importance when they become the possessors, or immediate heirs of wealth or title; and the weakly, pale-faced boy had suddenly grown into an object of so much anxiety in Lady Georgina's breast, as actually to rival Lady Georgina herself. Whilst engaged with these thoughts, the doors were suddenly thrown open, and a visitor entered, whom she little expected to see.

CHAPTER II.

A CONSIDERABLE time had elapsed before Ag[illegible] determined resolution to return home, a[illegible]



"It's not Mr. Capel—Mr. Capel's not dead; at least, that I know. I haven't heard anything of him," answered Agnes.

"Then what's the matter? Oh, you're deceiving me, Agnes! You have heard of him."

"No, indeed I have not."

"Where have you been, then?"

"Where you sent me."

"To the Morgue?"

"Yes."

"And did you see nobody there? no dead?"

"Oh, yes—yes."

"Who was it? Anybody you knew?"

"Yes."

"And not Mr. Capel?"

"No, indeed."

"It wasn't your child? Oh, Agnes, speak!"

"It was—oh! I dare not tell you who it was."

"Oh, my God! It wasn't Sir Abraham Towers?" for accidents were not present to Isabel's mind, and the idea struck her that her desertion might have caused the death of her *fiancé*. It is true, nothing could be more improbable and apparently out of character than Sir Abraham's

[redacted] sensible; but as he was the only p[erson] she was acquainted with, who, as far as [she] knew had any reason for wishing to bury th[eir] disagreements in the grave, her thoughts instan[tly] turned to him.

"N[o]," answered Agnes. "I don't think I shou[ld] know him: it was somebody I do know," and s[he] cast an Isabel with significance in her eye; s[he] wished the name to be guessed rather than [to] be

"It wasn't—it couldn't be my brother! [No] Agnes, you cannot mean it. You must h[ave] been mistaken. Don't say it was Lionel!"

Agnes's tears answered; her nerves had received

[redacted]

It was some time before she was sufficiently collected to hear the particulars, as far as Agnes knew them. On learning that the accident was supposed to have occurred when he was riding, she said:

"How often I have heard papa and my brothers-in-law entreat him to be more cautious about horses. Many a time has Mr. Damer told me he was afraid Lionel would some day meet with an accident. He was such a bad rider, and so rash."

As soon as the first burst of grief and surprise was over, she was seized with an access of remorse and self-reproach; she had forsaken her family, Lionel amongst the rest, and now she should never see him again! She magnified the uneasiness her disappearance must have caused him, and lamented that she had not at least relieved it by a letter. Then came the thought of what her parents would suffer when this dreadful news reached them. And for the first time the image of the pain she must herself have inflicted rose up before her in all its enormity. She forgot the provocation she had received, to see only her own cruelty and ingratitude, and the anguish of her family. The only reparation that remained in her power was to fly to them in

this hour of affliction; and if she did not
haste some other might have passed away, b
the reach of her repentance. Hurried away b
passion of grief, Agnes was requested to send
for a coach, and with her eyes blinded by
Isabel threw on her bonnet and shawl. If a
for Mr. Capel crossed her mind, it was so
to admit it, that she chased it remors
away.

"Good by, dearest Agnes! and be ass
shall never forget your kindness. I may n
able to come and see you soon, but I will wri
moment I can, and I hope it will not be
before we meet again. Be sure to write befo

ı sight. When it disappeared round the she turned to go up stairs and saw Barbara her.

ı! bien. Est elle partie, la petite dame?"

s!" answered Agnes.

ı! she's going back to her husband, s?"

ıe's going home," said Agnes, drily.

le jeune Monsieur du cinquième? où

"

ıara looked at Agnes as she asked this ın, with an expression denoting that she ıt there was some strange secret amongst

Certainly the unaccountable appearance ıdden departure of the guest, and the mys- absence of Mr. Capel, were sufficient to ı curiosity, if not suspicion.

don't know," answered Agnes.

ou don't know?" said Barbara.

o, I don't. I wish I did; and I think some es should be made."

ı! bien, je le crois aussi," answered Barbara. must send to the police."

o, pray!" said Agnes, as she ascended the bewildered by this succession of strange

[illegible] and shut herself into her apartment to resolve on our own plans. These were soon formed.

There was nothing left for it now but to quit Paris as quickly as possible. She would have liked to learn the cause of Mr. Capel's absence before she started: she would have been happy to know that he was safe; but she could not afford to wait, and she felt that it was better for her that they should meet no more. The piece of embroidery was almost finished: that afternoon's work would complete it, and she might be ready to depart by the following evening. She had enough to occupy her thoughts, and the hours flew by as she plied her needle till bed-time.

In the meanwhile, Isabel had found herself in the Hôtel before she had had time to summon resolution to resolve on what she should do or say, or to reflect in what sort of reception might await her. Indeed her mind was too much en-

[redacted]

"Pay the man!" she said to the astonished rter, as she passed him.

"Sacre!" said he to himself, as he rang his bell give notice to the servants in waiting. "C'est ble, ça!" and his amazement was not diminished en he heard in what quarter the young lady had n taken up, a piece of information he of course racted from the coachman.

As the only floor now inhabited was that occud by Lady Georgina, when Isabel reached the of the first flight of stairs, she found the door en, and the servants ready to receive whoever was ing up. Nevertheless, she would have continued ascend, but when she attempted to pass them, ey said:

"Miladi est ici," and supposing they meant r mother, she entered.

Lady Georgina, who was lying on the sofa, rted up with amazement as the groom of the ambers opened the door of the *salon* and anunced her.

The expression of the countenance was that of ughty surprise. Georgina's character was not e likely to engage the affections of Isabel; but ings and dislikings are forgotten in great emer-

[redacted] and the grief of the sister for her brother, and her sympathy for the widowed [redacted] banished every other feeling and recollection. She forgot even how open she was herself to reproach for her own errors and suffering seeming too petty to be thought of in this terrible crisis. She advanced with extended arms, crying:

"Oh! Georgina! Poor, poor Lionel!"

But Lady Georgina's grief was not of that mingled or quality to make her forget anything.

"I am perfectly amazed!" she said, drawing back. "Is it possible?" whilst Isabel, unable to speak, sank down weeping and sobbing on [redacted]

"Never mind where I have been. You'll know all by-and-by. Oh! Georgina, don't let us quarrel when poor Lionel is lying dead!"

"I have no intention of quarrelling—I never quarrel," answered Lady Georgina, coldly; "but you must be aware, that in presenting yourself here after what has occurred, you are placing me in a very embarrassing situation. I am really at a loss what to do!"

"I thought mamma was here, or I should not have come," sobbed Isabel; "and since my presence is so unwelcome, I had better go."

"Go where? Where are you to go to?" inquired Lady Georgina.

"I shall go to Ravenscliffe. I know I have done very wrong, Georgina, and I know I can hardly expect papa and mamma to forgive me; but the only reparation I can make is to return to them now that they will be in such distress."

"I think you have caused them distress enough yourself. Conduct so unaccountable, excuse me for saying, so shocking, I really never heard of in my life!"

"I know it must appear very bad—but I was scarcely in my senses. I couldn't marry Sir

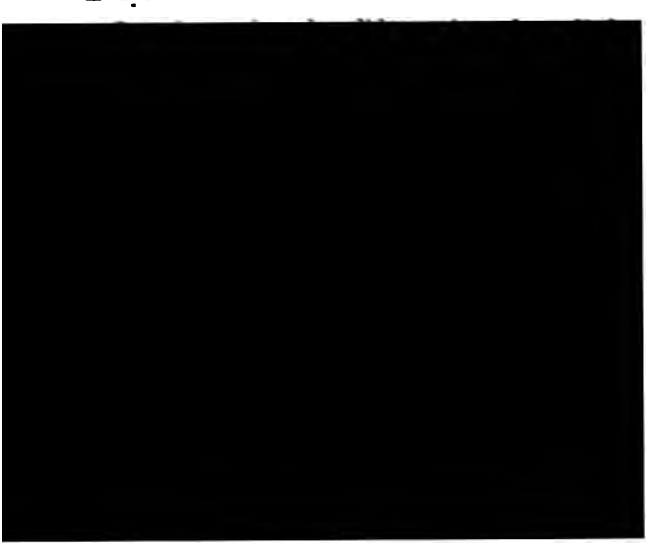
Abraham Towers, I preferred death to marrying him!"

"You have preferred disgrace, which is much worse, I think."

"I was taken very ill. For some time I was not even conscious of what had happened, nor of where I was. But for that I should have gone to Aunt Dorothy: and when I had been away so long I was afraid to come."

"Ill! And pray who took care of you in your illness?"

"A friend: a very kind friend, whom I shall always esteem as a sister."



over indulgent aristocratic crony. Under this impression, she permitted her to remain under her roof, and condescendingly agreed to *chaperone* her to Ravenscliffe.

CHAPTER III.

On the morning after these events, Agnes rose



sent; but as she expected the ring would bring a much larger sum than she otherwise needed, she hoped to be able to redeem some articles of her best attire, which Barbara, at her request, had disposed of.

With these intentions, she descended the stairs in her bonnet and shawl, with the embroidery in her hand, and the emerald ring on her finger for safety.

"I am going away to-night, Barbara," she said, "and I want you to get me back my veil and shawl, and my silk dress. Can you?"

"Mais oui, avec de l'argent," answered Barbara.

"I'll give you some, when I come in again."

"Et le loyer?" said Barbara, interrogatively.

"I'll pay that too."

"You'll have to pay the whole week, you know. Monsieur Bellon is very particular."

"Very well, I will; and as all that, and my journey too, will take a good deal of money, I must part with this ring. Do you know any honest jeweller that would buy it?"

"Ce sont de pierres fines?" asked Barbara, looking at the ring with admiration.

But Agnes did not comprehend what she meant and repeated her inquiry for an honest jeweller.

"J'ai un mien cousin," said Barbara, "who work for Monsieur Richard, bijoutier, Rue Vivienne; you like, I'll show it him; he'll be able to tell u what it's worth; and perhaps Monsieur Richa himself may buy it, that is to say, if they are n stones."

"Do ask him," said Agnes, drawing the r from her finger, and giving it to Barbara, in wh honesty she had perfect faith. "But, remem I go to-night, and I want my things to up."

"Well," said Barbara, "I can't go out till [illegible] won't be long

she would make him do it; whereupon, bidding her be sure to dispose of the ring, as the money was indispensable, Agnes bade her good-by, for the present, and departed on her errand; proceeding first to the *lingère* with her work, and afterwards, with part of the money accruing from it, securing her place in the diligence.

At length, she turned her steps homewards; and as she approached the gate, she observed Pierre standing on the outside of it, turning his head first up and then down the street, as if he were waiting for somebody. When his eye fell upon her, he looked round, and spoke to some one behind him, in a manner that led her to think she was herself the expected person.

"Mr. Capel is returned, or there is news of him," thought she, as she hastened her steps.

Pierre stood aside to make way for her, as she entered; and within, she saw Barbara and two men wearing a uniform, whom she supposed to be soldiers; they were, in fact, *sergents de ville*. Barbara was talking to them, with a countenance of great concern.

"Is there news of Monsieur Capel?" inquired Agnes.

"Oui," answered Barbara.

"Silence, s'il vous plait," said one of the officers turning her back, as he advanced to Agnes, and touching his hat with civility, said that he must request her to accompany him to the Commissaire de Police.

"What for?" asked Agnes, surprised at the intimation.

"Ce n'est pas à moi de vous dire cela," answered the man. "You will learn that at the Bureau."

"Has anything happened to Monsieur Capel" she inquired, turning to Barbara.

"I don't know," she responded, with a bla

"Ah, c'est-ce que je ne sais pas," replied the man, shrugging his shoulders.

All this while, Barbara stood with her eyes fixed on Agnes, with the same expression of blank dismay, but still with an evident desire to say something which the presence of the officers prevented.

There being a stand of coaches close at hand, one of them was soon at the door; whereupon saying, "A votre plaisir, Madame," the two strangers proceeded to hand in Agnes; an operation that by no means passed unnoticed by the passengers in the street, who instinctively stopped to observe it; whilst Agnes, beginning to have a vague idea that she was a prisoner, felt extremely uncomfortable. But a prisoner for what? Was it anything connected with Mr. Capel or with Mr. Grosvenor, or had Isabel fallen into some new misfortune? She was, however, more annoyed than alarmed, being unconscious of harm, and not naturally timid.

One of the officers got into the coach with her, the other seated himself on the box, and away they drove through the Boulevards and the Rue St. Honoré, till they crossed the river, and reached

a long narrow street in the Fauxbourg St. Germains, where the coach drew up at a house, in front of which there was a square lantern of coloured glass already burning, the afternoon being dusky. Here the men alighted, and assisting Agnes to do the same, they led her up a dark stair, to a door on which was inscribed "Bureau de Police." This they pushed open, and having conducted her into a small room, they begged her to be seated, and left her alone.

There was no light in the room except what was reflected from the window, and that was extremely little; but as she explored the place, wondering how long she was to be detained there, she ob—

that hung against the wall. The illumination that ensued disclosed the portly figure of the Commissaire.

"I have to interrogate you, Madame," he said, with civility, "respecting some circumstances, with regard to which it is necessary that we obtain information."

He addressed her first in French, but finding her unable to follow him, he spoke English—broken, but intelligible.

To this exordium, Agnes bowed; whereon he proceeded to inquire her name, age, occupation, &c., together with the period of her arrival in Paris, and the address of the different houses she had inhabited since she came; comparing her answers with certain papers he held in his hand, one of which, she perceived, was her own passport; whereby it appeared he was aware that she had arrived in company with another Englishwoman, who had already quitted France. Her responses appearing so far satisfactory, he next desired to know the object of her journey.

"It was not simply an excursion of pleasure, I presume? You had some business?"

"There was a person here whom I wished to see."

"Had she any objection to name this person?"

At this question she hesitated, being very unwilling to name Mr. Grosvenor.

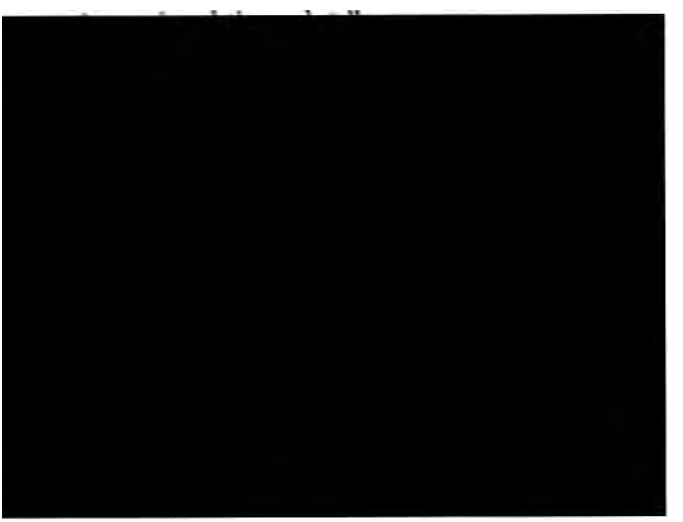
"I had rather not," she said. "It was about a private affair of my own, and cannot concern any one else."

"Had she seen that person?"

"Yes, I have."

"Was the lady who accompanied her in any way connected with that affair."

"Not at all. I never saw that lady till I met



the name of St. George, residing in the Rue de Helder?"

"Yes."

"And you lived some days in their house?"

"Yes, about ten days."

"Did you observe anything particular during that residence?"

Agnes answered "No," but not quite with a clear conscience, since in a conversation with Mr. Capel, one evening, in which she had spoken of the company that frequented that house, he had expressed his conviction of its being a private *maison de jeu*. However, when the Commissaire asked her if she had not seen a great deal of high play there, and other questions of a similar tendency, she could safely answer *no;* things having been so managed that she never had *seen* it. Suspicious sounds alone had reached her.

After putting to her in this manner a variety of questions, some of which referred to her late visitor, whilst the purport of others she could not detect, the Commissaire suddenly drew from his waistcoat pocket the diamond and ruby ring that Isabel had requested Mr. Capel to dispose of for them, and

inquired if she had ever seen it before. Agnes said "Yes, she believed she had, or one like it."

"Where did you see it?"

"In the house I lodge in."

"In whose possession?"

"It belonged to a lady, who gave it to a person to sell."

"Was that the lady who has been lately living with you?"

"Yes, it was."

"Can you tell me the lady's name?"

"No, I am not at liberty to tell it."

"Can you tell me the name of the person you allege she gave it to?"



the St. Georges, and lastly Mr. Capel; but now she began to fear that it was Isabel and herself. For the first time she changed colour, as she answered that she did know the ring, and that it had belonged to the same lady. "But she gave it to me."

"Cette dame fait des cadeaux magnifiques," remarked the Commissaire. "Though you decline to name so generous a person, you will perhaps tell me where she lives?"

"In England," answered Agnes.

"Yes, when she is at home. But we wish to know where she resides in Paris when not with you?"

"I don't know," answered Agnes, anxious to shield Isabel, and indeed herself from all the annoyances that might ensue were the connection that subsisted betwixt the rings and herself, and Mr. Capel exposed at the Hôtel de Breteuil.

"And you don't know where she is now?"

"No," answered Agnes, casting down her eyes.

"But you could guess, perhaps?"

"If I could, I am not at liberty to tell. I could not tell without her permission."

"Is she not sometimes to be found at the house of Madame St. George?"

"No, never," replied Agnes, again puzzled; for if it was Isabel they were seeking it was not likely they would look for her there.

"Are you sure she does not frequent the house of Monsieur St. George?"

"Quite certain!" answered Agnes with confidence. Whereupon, the Commissaire after a moment's reflection arose and left the room. Upwards of a quarter of an hour had elapsed before he reappeared, and when he did, it was in company with a lady whom Agnes immediately recognised as one of the *habituées* of the Rue de Hanôvre, where she had seen her almost every night during her visit. She was an Englishwoman; at least, so she herself said, though Agnes would not have discovered it, for her manner and appearance was French, and she spoke the language like a [redacted] Madame St. George had mentioned that [redacted] when very young. She [redacted] and

"You are acquainted with this lady?" said the Commissary.

"Yes," answered Agnes, "I have seen her at Monsieur St. George's."

"And it is from her you received this ring which I hold in my hand?"

"Oh! no," she answered. Whereupon the lady smiled triumphantly.

"Vous voyez comme vous vous trompez, Monsieur," she said.

"C'est possible, Madame; mais je ne le crois pas!" said he; and requesting the lady to follow him, he was about to leave the room, when Agnes rose and begged to represent to him the extreme inconvenience she should suffer if longer detained.

"I have taken my place for Calais in to-night's diligence," she urged, "and paid for it;" to which the Commissaire answered he was very sorry but it could not be helped; and so left the room.

She had sat for a long time looking through the dirty window into the dull street, weeping with impatience and vexation, when at length the door opened again, and the two men who had brought her there made their appearance, and civilly requested

permission to conduct her down stairs. At the gate stood a *fiacre,* into which they handed her; one stepped in and the other mounted to the box.

"Thank Heaven!" thought Agnes, "they've done with me at last!"

CHAPTER IV.

We parted with Agnes just now as she was handed into a *fiacre*, congratulating herself on the termination of this tiresome investigation, though wondering whither she was to be conducted next.

A few minutes, however, revealed the mystery; for presently the driver stopped before a large hotel in the Champs Elysées, which she recognized as the one inhabited by the Ravenscliffe family, and a cold shudder of dread crept over her as the gates opened and the coach drove into the court. Isabel's secret then was no longer a secret. But what could they want with her?

She had not much time to perplex herself with the question, for presently the door was opened, she was handed out, and accompanied by the two officers and a very dignified person in black, who she concluded to be one of the upper servants, she was conducted up the first flight of stairs, and desired to take a seat in the ante-room whilst the gentleman in black announced her arrival.

"Cette femme est arrivée, Miladi," said he, passing into an inner chamber where Lady Georgina reclined on a sofa.

"And what sort of person is she? Of what class?"

"Bourgeoise il me semble, mais jeune et belle."

"Le dîner est servi, Miladi!" said a servant, entering at the opposite door.

"The young woman can wait Miladi's leisure," said Millot, attending his mistress into the *salle à manger*.

"Very well, I'll see her by-and-by," said Lady Georgina. "Let Miss Grosvenor know that dinner is ready."

"Mademoiselle Grosvenor est avertie, Miladi;" and at the same time, pale and *abattue*, Isabel entered the room, and silently took her seat at the table; and whilst the two ladies, in all the discomfort of dislike and estrangement, are sipping their soup, we will retrace our steps, in order to show in a few words how it came about that Agnes found herself where she so little wished or expected to be.

To explain Mr. Capel's absence, it is sufficient to say, that, as Isabel had apprehended, the attempt to dispose of the ring had subjected him to suspicion. There had been a robbery of jewels shortly before, the parties concerned in which had not yet been detected; and his obstinate refusal to reveal where he got the article he wanted to sell, had led to his detention. Fearing to expose Isabel

to inconvenience, he had declined also to disclose his name and address; and it was not till Pierre went to give notice of the disappearance of one of his *locataires*, that they ascertained who he was, and proceeded to prosecute the inquiry further by arresting Agnes.

The sagacity of the Commissaire, however, enabled him to form a pretty just opinion of his two *détenus*. He believed they were telling him the truth, and at first imagined them to be the unconscious tools of practised rogues; till the assurance of Agnes, that Madame Guérin was an utter stranger to the whole affair, inclined them to suspect they were on a wrong scent, several cir-

she came, was very fine, and *garni d'une Valenciennes superbe.*

Pierre was then interrogated as to the period of her arrival, which being found to coincide precisely with Isabel's disappearance, other suspicions began to dawn. Could the *petite dame* be the aristocratic fugitive, who had formed a romantic attachment to the young student, and eloped to him?—and had his detention at the police-office driven her to some new act of desperation or imprudence? To clear up this point, the Commissaire himself stepped into his cabriolet, and immediately drove to the Hôtel de Breteuil, where he learned the family affliction, and that the elder members of it had quitted Paris. His request, however, to speak a few words with *quelque domestique de confiance,* brought down Millot, to whom he told his errand.

"We have traces," he said, "of a lady, *jeune et belle,* who came to a house in the Rue Joubert, under very singular circumstances, on the very night, and shortly after the hour of the disappearance of the *demoiselle* from this hotel."

"But we have her here: she is come back," said Millot.

"When did she come?"

"Yesterday afternoon, about five o'clock."

"Précisement. En fiacre?"

"Oui."

"La même. I have here two rings of
which have been offered for sale by the
in whose company she spent the interval
absence, and which, I suspect, belong t
Will you have the goodness to inquire w
she really gave them to these people?"

Millot was Lady Georgina's confidential
and aware that his mistress was on all ac
very desirous of knowing where the youn

nothing was to be extracted from the young lady herself, it was resolved to see this Mrs. Gibson, and try what could be learned from her. This was the occasion of Agnes's finding herself at the Hôtel de Breteuil.

The temporary modification of hostility that had arisen out of Lady Georgina's delusion, with respect to the rank of the parties with whom she had taken refuge, was, of course, terminated by the disclosures of the Commissaire; and Isabel found her sister-in-law as haughty, cold, and imperious, as she had shown herself on their first meeting.

Dinner being over, they separated; and Lady Georgina desired Millot to introduce the person that had come from the police-office.

When Agnes was requested to follow him, it was with no little tremor she complied; for though she expected to see Isabel, she thought she should see Lady Grosvenor also, of whom she stood in great awe. When she perceived Lady Georgina, however, she was less abashed. Her dislike diminished her fear; besides, she owed her nothing—there was no duty, no obligation. She stood, therefore, erect and possessed, but modestly, before the great lady, who was seated in her *fau-*

teuil by the fireside. There was a beautiful or-
lamp on the table, which shed a tempered l
around; but Agnes stood in the shade.

"Come forward!" said Lady Georgina, surve
her from head to foot, without recognising
little plebeian, whom she had pushed off
form in the dancing-school. "Your name is Gib
I think?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"And you live in the Rue Joubert?"

"I do, at present."

"And you're an embroideress?"

"I embroider muslin sometimes."



the *trousseau*, and in that way, Bel has become acquainted with her. And pray, is it true that one of Sir Francis Grosvenor's daughters has been living under your roof?" Agnes was silent. "Will you have the goodness to answer me?" continued her Ladyship, haughtily; "I wish to know whether I have been rightly informed."

Agnes hesitated for a moment. If Isabel had confessed, what need of this interrogative? If she had not, she probably wished her sister-in-law to remain in ignorance of the fact.

"The ladies themselves could best answer that, Ma'am," she said.

"You equivocate," said her Ladyship, sarcastically.

"No, Ma'am: what I said was quite true."

"It's altogether the most inconceivable, the most shocking, the most disgraceful *imbroglio*—I really cannot understand it. And this man too, that seems mixed up with the affair—who is he? Capel, I think they call him. Is he a relation of yours?"

"No, Ma'am; he is only a lodger in the same house. He lives on the floor above mine."

"And is it possible that Miss Grosvenor should

have formed an acquaintance with such a per
Agnes was again silent. "I suppose you
duced this person to her?"

"No, Ma'am, I did not."

"I perceive you have been tutored, and
evasions are no doubt very ingenious. Pe
if Miss Grosvenor were to see you, you wou
recognise each other."

On saying which, she rang a small silver bel
stood on the table beside her.

"Millot," she said, as that unexceptional
mestic entered, "tell Miss Grosvenor I requ
will favour me with her company for a fe

by Millot, who opened the door of the *boudoir* and announced her. Agnes stood in the shade, with her bonnet on, the veil, though thrown up, partly shading her face. Isabel passed her, and approached the table, saying, "Did you want me?"

"I believe this is a friend of yours. I really admire the taste with which you select your acquaintance."

"I might make a worse selection," answered Isabel, holding out her hand. "I am under great obligations to Agnes, and but for her kindness, should most likely not be alive at this moment."

"Agnes!" reiterated Lady Georgina, struck by the name, and looking at her visitor with greater attention. "Is it possible that this is the girl I used to see at Ravenscliffe? Oh, I am not at all surprised then at what has happened. I never could understand Lady Grosvenor encouraging such people about her daughters. And pray what has brought you to Paris?" she added, contemptuously.

"You have no right to inquire, Georgina," said Isabel. "She is as much at liberty to come to Paris as we are. My dear Agnes!" she continued, "I am very sorry that your kindness to me should

have exposed you to this annoyance, and I assur
you it is not with my connivance. The fact is
Georgina—for I see that for Agnes's sake, I mus
now confess that which I designed to reserve f
mamma and papa—the fact is, that I quitted th
house with the intention of never entering eith
this, or any other door again. I did not know th
Agnes was in Paris; chance alone brought
together. She gave me shelter, nursed me throu
a dangerous illness with sisterly kindness, a
spent all the little money she had in supplying m
necessities. I leave you to judge, therefore, ho
far you are justified in insulting her to whom I am
under such great obligations."

glad to have the opportunity of giving it to you; not to discharge the obligation I owe you, that will always remain; but I know you distressed yourself for me, and you must want the money."

"I should wish to return the ring you left," said Agnes; "but they have it at the police-office, and I don't know whether they will give it me back."

"It is here," said Lady Georgina, producing both the rings.

"The police!" exclaimed Isabel. "And here is the other, I see," she said, looking significantly at Agnes. "Where was that found?"

"I don't know," returned she.

"It seems to have been in the possession of another of your respectable acquaintance," said Georgina, "whom the police very properly detained on suspicion. Enfin," she said, raising her hands and her shoulders with a deprecating gesture, "c'est à mourir de honte."

"I am very sorry—very sorry, indeed. Pray say so for me!" exclaimed Isabel, blushing, trembling, and with the tears rising to her eyes, as the full tide of recollections connected with Mr. Capet rushed to her mind. "I am so grieved that any-

body should have suffered inconvenience on my account. Don't forget to say so, Agnes."

"I will not."

Isabel longed to obtain more intelligence, but her consciousness forbad her to ask it.

CHAPTER V.

When Leighton found that Mr. Grosvenor was really dead, nothing could exceed his disappointment. He had began to build hopes of retrieving his fortunes, but his late master's compassion was the scaffolding on which they all rested, and he saw nothing now before him but starvation. As the cause—in some degree innocent cause—of the catastrophe, he felt more resentment towards Mr. Watson than he had ever felt towards mortal before, a circumstance which arose from the natural antipathy which he entertained to that gentleman requiring only a small infusion of injury to effervesce it into an active enmity. He would have liked to do him some harm; and perhaps he might,

[redacted] with Atherton and the [redacted] but who would listen [redacted] as he could prove nothi[redacted] He did not see what he could d[redacted] offered, he resolved [redacted] These were his present sentime[redacted] a man of vivid feelings or str[redacted] probably have exp[redacted] offered, but for ce[redacted] unexpectedly opened a wa[redacted] In the meanwhile, the n[redacted] had to be supplied; and as [redacted] it occurred to him to go [redacted] and tell him what had happened. Besi[redacted]

"Somebody from the Hôtel de Breteuil," said e, glancing at his companion. "What the devil an that be about? Anything about the horse, I wonder?"

"You know nothing about the horse, you know," said Atherton. "Let him come in."

Watson would have preferred not being seen by Lionel's messenger in the company of one so nearly connected with Firebrass, but he was afraid of offending Atherton, and forbore to ask him the favour of stepping into the next room.

"Oh, it's you!" he said, carelessly, on perceiving the ex-valet. "Do you come from Mr. Grosvenor?"

"I come from the Hôtel de Breteuil, Sir. Perhaps you don't know what has happened?"

"Happened! no—where? Happened to who?" inquired Watson, with suppressed eagerness; for, like most people who expect an inheritance, near or remote, the extinction of the present possessors could never have taken him by surprise. It would be well if everybody was as well prepared for their own deathe as he was for theirs, every one of them.

"To Mr. Grosvenor, Sir."

"What has happened to him?" said he, the

colour rushing into his face; whilst Atherton laid down his knife and fork, and looked inquiringly at Leighton.

"He's dead, Sir!"

"Dead!" reiterated Lewis, turning pale from the violence of his emotions. "You're surely mistaken."

"No, Sir. I've seen his body at the Morgue. He was thrown from his horse in the Bois de Boulogne, as he was returning yesterday evening from the country, and was found this morning by a wood-cutter."

When Leighton pronounced the word *horse*, Atherton resumed his knife and fork, and went on

"You warned him? Why? What did you know about the horse?"

"I knew he wasn't safe, and that there would most likely be an accident."

By this time Mr. Watson had recovered his surprise at the first announcement of the news, and it required little discernment to detect gleams of satisfaction breaking through his assumed concern. On learning the character of the animal, however, his eye involuntarily turned towards Atherton, who continued eating his *œufs au jus* with imperturbable composure.

"He nearly killed two people in Dublin," continued Leighton; "one of them was the Hon. Mr. Luttrell, and the other was one of the rough-riders at Dycer's. There are people here that know the character of the horse very well."

At this moment the door opened, and in rushed a young man whom Leighton had occasionally seen in the company of Watson.

"Huzzah!" cried he. "What will you give me for the best news you ever had in your life? Come, it's worth something handsome, I can tell you;" and as Watson, who guessed his errand, hesitated a moment what to say before Leighton, the other

[redacted] Duke de Beaumont's head, thrown from [redacted] the Bois de Boulogne, skull fractured [redacted] immediately dead; and now, ol[redacted] [redacted] struggle the first and the fou[redacted]

[redacted] would have presented at that moment t[redacted] [redacted] Brighton was a poor, broken- [redacted] [redacted] plan, and bore him no ill-will [redacted] [redacted] for his acquaintance with the [redacted] [redacted] might be unpleasant, should [redacted] [redacted] his own connexion with that [redacted] [redacted] There were other reasons, [redacted] [redacted] Brighton to suppose him desirous of his cousin's death. These untimely

"I told you the boy was delicate, and I was afraid he might not; but I assure you I consider the death of my cousin Lionel a very melancholy event, and I regret it very much."

Mr. Blessington drew a long face and stroked it down with his left hand, whilst with his right he took out his pocket-handkerchief. "Oh, very well," he said, "I can be as melancholy as another man, when I see it's the cue of my company. Come," he continued, throwing himself down before the fire,

> "'Let's sit upon the ground,
> And tell sad stories of the death of cousins.
> How some——"

"Well, Leighton," said Mr. Watson, interrupting the quotation, and at the same time drawing a sovereign from his now well-lined pocket, "I'm much obliged to you for calling, and I'm sorry you are not the bearer of better news."

"What?" said Blessington, "is Lady Georgina in the straw? Another son? That *would* be the devil!"

Leighton put the sovereign in his pocket, bowed, and was about to withdraw, when he bethought



…ant a situation?" said

…. Sir, I do: and if you co
…should be very thankful."
…Well, I must think about it; I'
…not be wanting a servant
…address, and you shall hear fro
…e had no intention whatever of
…o his service, when he said this;
… make it his interest to keep
…he *ruse* was thrown away, however
…through it; the benevolence not
…with Watson's late behaviour, w
… accordance with his private c
…time Leighton lifted his hat

"I saw the fellow was only a servant," said Blessington; "besides, what does it signify? You didn't kill your cousin, did you? And they can't do you out of your money, if you danced a hornpipe at his funeral."

"Ah! by-the-bye, the funeral!" said Watson: "I ought to be at that funeral, but I suppose they won't invite me."

It was an admirable thing to see Atherton's composure during the whole of this scene, and the enviable appetite with which he enjoyed his *œufs au jus* and his *rognons au vin de Champagne*. On the catastrophe he had heard narrated, he made no remark whatever; but when he had finished eating, and used his finger-glass, *à la Française*, he threw down his napkin, pushed back his chair, and walking to the pier-glass, buttoned his coat, took up his hat and gloves, saying, "Come, will you walk?" with an air of indifference worthy of a Stoic, who, considering that men die every day, could see nothing worthy of notice in the event that had just occurred.

In the meantime, Leighton had descended the stairs, and reached the end of the street, without knowing what he was about; he was as unconscious

as if he had been walking in his sleep. A rush of terrible thoughts possessed his brain—all confused and horrible and cloudy—but still with something clear in them that he could not define.

Mr. Watson was the next heir to the Ravenscliffe estates (as he [illegible] He Leighton) had never dreamed of such a thing. A poor man, the succession must [illegible] affair of life and death to him; and [illegible] had eagerly desired his cousin's decease. He felt he should have done the same himself. What a fine chance the horse presented! [illegible] had probably entered into the scheme [illegible] hope of future recompense, and brought

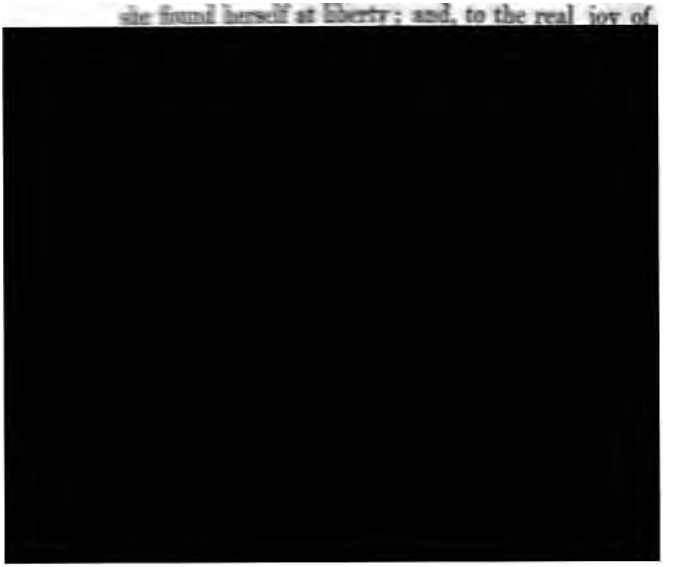
trusted his own capabilities for using such an engine: he wanted energy, will, and wickedness, for it.

Then there were other parts of Watson's conduct that he began to suspect were not without some design, tending to the one great end, although he could not discern the relation betwixt them, especially his desire to separate Lionel and Agnes. Vague notions began to float in his brain, connected with past events; small circumstances assumed a new importance. He felt elated and busy, as if he had an object to pursue, though he did not clearly know what that object was.



CHAPTER VI.

When Agnes was dismissed by Lady Georgina, she found herself at liberty; and, to the real joy of



depart immediately, and his expressions of regret were so vivid and evidently sincere, that they appeared to indicate a warmer regard than she had believed he entertained for her. He said he should return to England himself as soon as he could arrange some little matters regarding the publication of a paper he had read at the Observatoire, on Jupiter's satellites.

Poor Agnes wondered what Jupiter's satellites were; and she would have inquired, had not the thought crossed her that Isabel would know without asking.

"But an acquaintance formed under such interesting circumstances, must not terminate so abruptly," he said. "I hope you'll allow me to call on you in London."

"I shall be very glad to see you," she answered, and gave him her address.

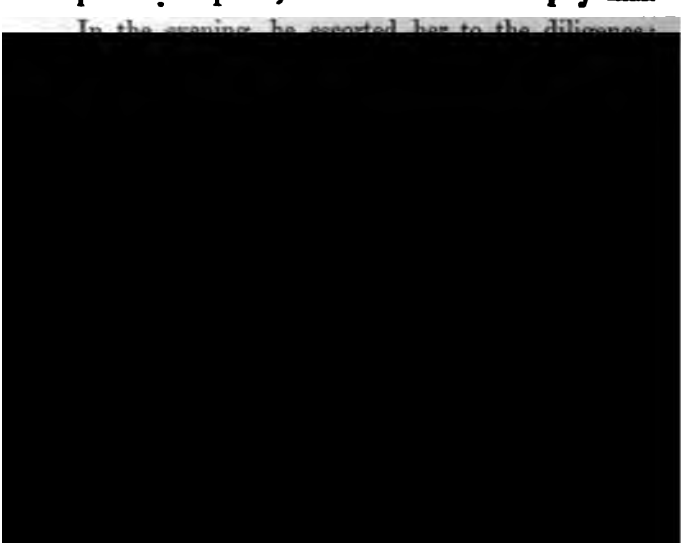
He was very kind, and desirous of being useful to her in every way he could; but, ever and anon, his conversation reverted to the friend. He hoped she would be happier than she had been, and that her family would make no more attempts to force her into a marriage she disliked.

"But, perhaps," he said, "she had altered her

mind, and intends to accept the gentleman she was engaged to?"

Agnes said she did not think so; at the same time, it might be difficult to resist the united wills of her family.

A cloud passed over his face as she said this, and he expatiated eloquently on the barbarity of constraining so amiable, gentle, and lovely a creature to pass her life with one to whom she could not give her heart. In short, it was evident that, although he was talking to Agnes, his thoughts were with Isabel; and as his passion appeared at the moment perfectly hopeless, she could afford to pity him.



invitation which some more timid travellers declined.

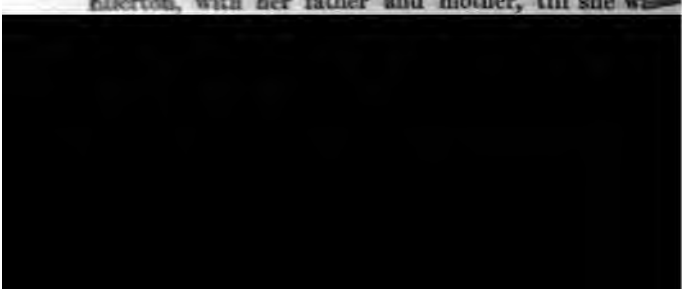
The wind was adverse, and they had not been long out of the harbour before the vessel began to toss and heave in a manner that soon cleared the deck of all but the crew; and at length, after they had been cheered with the intelligence that they were so near to Dover, that the people on the pier, who were assembled to watch their arrival, could be discerned, it was found impossible to get into the harbour, and they were obliged to put out again, and make for Deal, where they landed late at night —sick, wet, and weary—to fall victims into the jaws of the touters for the different hotels.

Agnes and two or three more were seized upon and carried off by the waiter of a small inn, called the Crown and Anchor, where the little party of voyagers, made friends by their misfortune, supped together. Amongst them was a comely young woman, with her husband, to whom Agnes rendered herself agreeable, by occasionally relieving the mother of the weight of her chubby child.

As they were all going to London, they agreed to travel together; but the next day being Sunday, it proved, on inquiry, that fewer coaches ran than

on other days; and they could not find place having deferred their application too long for the morning conveyances: they therefore secured them for the evening, and retired to bed, resolved to enjoy a long rest, and indulge themselves with late breakfast.

Agnes was at sea all night, and, after a disturbed sleep, awoke with a headache. Her fellow-traveller the young woman, being not much better, they agreed to take a stroll through the town and its environs, to refresh themselves. In the afternoon Agnes said she should like to go to church; the young mother could not leave her infant, but the husband expressed his willingness to accompany her; so they went to St. Peter's, and found a seat in the aisle. The church and the congregation were so unlike anything Agnes had seen for a long time, that her thoughts wandered back to the old times when she used to attend the service at Ellerton, with her father and mother, till she was



that of the person who had performed the mock ceremony of her marriage in the chapel at Ravenscliffe.

"Mock ceremony!"—that was what Mr. Conyers had called it—"a very improper jest." But if he were really a clergyman, how could it be a mock ceremony? She wondered what constituted a real one. She knew it was customary to be asked in church—could that be the omission that invalidated the bond? But perhaps she was mistaken in the identity? A strong resemblance may have deceived her; and she looked and listened again. There was no mistake. Besides the features and voice, the reader had a peculiar way of pronouncing certain words, which had struck her ear on the first occasion, and which she now recognised as the same, beyond a doubt.

Engrossed with this discovery, she heard no more of the service, till she found herself on her feet, coming out with the rest.

"What is the name of the gentleman that read prayers?" she inquired of the pew-opener, as she passed.

"The Rev. Mr. Watson," answered the woman.

"Watson?"

"Yes: he's the new curate."

"Does he come from any part about Bristo—" inquired Hewson, Agnes's companion; but [illegible] pouring out, separated them, and in[illegible] the answer. "There was a Rev. Mr. Wats[illegible] lives near where I come from," continued Hews[illegible] that had two sons; and when first I went [illegible]. I've often been at the vicarage with me[illegible] sons. I shouldn't wonder if this was one of thos[illegible] two boys."

"Do you see a likeness?" inquired Agnes, who[illegible] curiosity was on the alert.

"I couldn't say that; they were so young: t[illegible]

little business; but wherever we are, my sister's sure to know."

And so they parted. They went their way, with a porter carrying their luggage; whilst Agnes stepped into a coach, and drove home.

Martha was sitting on the same chair, as when she had last seen her at work, and running seams, as if she had been doing so uninterruptedly ever since they parted. When the door opened, and she found Agnes's arms about her neck—she wept for joy. She had been expecting her some days, but had given her up; so that her arrival had all the charm of a surprise.

"And how glad John will be!" she exclaimed. "He was so disappointed last night that you didn't come."

Then Agnes had to narrate all her adventures, which she had already imperfectly sketched in her letters; but the first intelligence she gave was the lamentable death of Lionel, and her meeting with the pretended clergyman at Deal.

"He is a real one now," she said, "whatever he may have been then."

When she came to the period of Isabel's arrival in the Rue Joubert, and Martha learned that she

had been her sister's guest for several we
nothing could exceed her amazement. In sh
the incidents of Agnes's journey were altogeth
sufficiently extraordinary to excite the most u
imaginative mind.

Who that has had an object dear to her hea
in some jeopardy—ill, lost, or involved in peril—
has not figured to herself as she approached the spot
where her doubts were to be solved, all the possible
complexions the news might assume—often fearing
when there was little cause, and hoping against
reason, as if hope grew out of despair? So Agnes's
heart fluttered, as she drew near her home. Would
not Martha have something to tell of her boy? It
was not long since she had received a letter from
her, certainly; and she had nothing to tell then:
on the contrary, she said all their researches and
inquiries had been utterly fruitless; but that was a
fortnight ago—many things might have occurred
in a fortnight. What if she should find him there,

for her; and with an unconscious desire to husband her hope, she forbore to ask questions.

If Martha had any news, good or bad, it would soon come; and though her bosom was stirred with anxiety to know, she forbore, for some time, to inquire.

In the meanwhile, John Gibson arrived, and was both surprised and overjoyed to see her; but as soon as the first glow of the meeting was over, she thought he looked more grave and depressed than she could account for. To be sure, his self-reproach about the child had been very acute; and the sight of her, after her absence, had probably revived his remorse. To spare him, therefore, she said nothing on the subject nearest her heart; but talked of what had happened since they met, the particulars of which John promised to come and hear in the evening.

When he was gone, Agnes summoned resolution, and at length said:

"Well, Martha, and have you no news?"

"About what, dear?" asked Martha, looking down at her work.

"About what! About my boy, to be sure. Oh,

Martha, you've heard something! He's dead
I see by your face, he's dead!"

"No, no; indeed, it's no such thing," cri
Martha. "Perhaps I have heard something, b
I hardly know whether it is good or bad; but h
not dead, only—"

"Say what it is, for God's sake!" gasped Agn

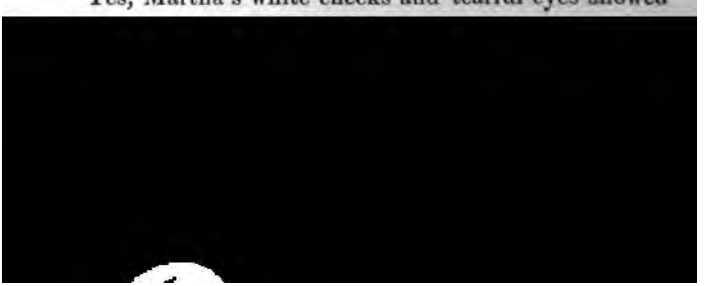
"I don't know whether you are able to bear it,"
said Martha, "and yet I think you should be glad;
it might have been so much worse."

"What is it? I can bear anything. For mercy's
sake, tell me what it is!"

Martha rose from her seat, unlocked a mahogany box that stood upon the drawers, drew from it a letter, and placed it in her sister's hand.

"Read that," she said.

Agnes took the paper, but she could not read it; at first she could not even look at it. She knew that it contained her doom, her sentence—of death! Yes, Martha's white cheeks and tearful eyes showed



"By the post?"

"Yes."

"Who from?"

"We don't know. It's only signed, '*a friend.*'"

"No date?"

"No; read it."

But Agnes sat trembling, and as pale as a statue, with the letter in her hand. It was written on a shabby bit of paper, half a sheet of foolscap, and the manner in which it was folded indicated little taste for symmetry. The address was crowded into one corner, and the writing was that of an untaught hand. By the post-mark it appeared to have been dropped into a box in Oxford Street; and it was closed with a red wafer, but without any impression.

"Then all hope is gone. Oh, my boy! my boy! my darling, darling child!" cried Agnes, laying her head upon the table, and bursting into a passion of tears. "I never could believe it. I have always hoped and hoped; I did not know how much I had hoped till now. I thought there must be some help, some protection against such cruelty and wickedness. If it's a crime to take one's life, and people are sought out and punished for it, why

[redacted] they seek those who have taken my child, [redacted] was a thousand times dearer to me than my life."

"Read it, dear, read it. Perhaps it's not so bad as [redacted] think," said Martha.

"I [redacted]—I haven't courage," sobbed Agnes. "Read it—read it to me yourself."



CHAPTER VII.

About three weeks previous to the events detailed in the last chapter, a woman lay sick in an upper chamber of a house in Baker Street. She was somewhat seriously ill, though not so bad as she thought she was; but the apothecary who had been summoned to attend her, when her own skill proved inefficacious, made it a point to look grave and pompous on such occasions; because, the worse his patients had been, or fancied they had been, the more grateful they felt to him when they found themselves getting well again. Most people—women especially—who recover from a severe malady, are found to entertain an enthusiastic opinion of their doctor's skill, little dreaming

where they would have been, nine times in ten, if nature had not been more skilful than he.

Beside her bed sat a middle-aged man, wearing the dress of a gentleman's servant, but with a certain stiffness of the neck and erectness of carriage, that, together with the cropped head of hair bespoke him for a soldier. This woman was Mrs. Driscoll, and the man was David, her husband, who had just re-entered the room after conducting the doctor to the door; during which process the learned man had looked so grave and wise, and had responded to David's questions regarding his wife's condition so unsatisfactorily, that the conjugal affections took the alarm, and

"Why, what would you have him say? He can't tell, you know."

"I wouldn't give a groat for a doctor that can't tell," said Mrs. Driscoll. "I don't believe I'm so bad as he wants to make me out."

"Bad and good's in the hands of the Lord, as Master says," returned David. "It's not possible for man to say."

"Good Lord, David, how you talk! One 'ud think I was going to die!"

"No, no; not so bad as that, I hope. Come, come, old woman, you must keep up your spirits. Thinking so much about it won't do you no good, any way."

"It's you make me think about it, David, by the way you talk."

"I didn't say anything to frighten you, that I know," said David.

"But you looked enough to frighten one," reiterated his wife.

"Well, I didn't mean it," answered David.

After this, Mrs. Driscoll was silent for a little while, and her husband, thinking she was falling asleep, rose softly and was making his way on tip-toe out of the room. But she heard him.

"Where are you going, David?"

"I was only going below a bit."

"Don't go; I want to speak to you."

"I don't think you ought to talk so much; it's bad for people when they're ill."

"But I've got something on my mind; and if I thought there was any danger, I should like to tell it you."

This confession raised David's curiosity considerably. He had once been jealous of a certain ensign, who he fancied had been over civil to his wife. The married pair had had some squabbles on the subject, and upon this hint, the husband's fancy took wing immediately in that

be better for relieving her mind of the load that oppressed it.

"But I don't like to tell you, David," she said, when he had got her into a better temper. "I'm afraid you'll be so angry."

This apprehension confirmed David in his suspicions, and he did begin to feel not a little irritated. "Come, come," he said, "you may as well have it out. I always suspected it. There ain't so much smoke without some fire."

"You always suspected what?" asked his wife.

"You know very well, and good reason I had."

"What, your mind's not harping on young Mr. Cambell again?"

"Why, what is it, if it's not about Mr. Cambell?"

"It's about a very different person. I wish I'd no more to answer for than Mr. Cambell."

"Why, what the deuce! I never saw you intimate with nobody besides!"

"Pshaw! intimate! It's not about intimate at all. It's about the child—the master's child—Master Charles."

"What about him? He seems very well," answered the husband.

"Oh, David!" said she, weeping, "I can't keep it any longer. I must tell you."

"What do you mean? Can't keep what any longer?"

"Have patience, and give me a drink of the barley-water. I'll take a few minutes to rest, and then I'll tell you."

"Now, David, you must promise me not to be angry," she said, when she resumed speaking, "for I did it for the best, particularly for Helen."

"Well, what did you do?"

"I'm sure I took every care of the child, as if he'd been my own, and as it was my interest so to do; for if anything happened to him, the money stopped, and there was little likelihood of such another chance."

"That's true. But he looks uncommon healthy."

"Oh, David! little the Major thinks, when kissing and hugging him."

"What, is there anything the matter with

"Helen sickened of it first, and I was nigh losing her; and just as she was a-getting well, Master Lawrence took it. I nursed him day and night, God knows! and the doctor came to him twice a-day; but we couldn't keep the life in him, do what we would."

"Well," said David, with an amazed countenance, for he was beginning to get a glimmering of the truth, "and was buried."

"To be sure he was; and when I came back from seeing him laid in the ground, I sat me down and cried, for I was more vexed than words can tell; it was just a fortune to Helen, his being with me; and what was I to do with her if I went to service again?"

"That's true. But how did you get this one?"

"Well, one day, just before Helen was taken ill, as I was going out with the children, Mrs. Smithers, that was the woman of the house where we lodged in Duke Street, St. James's, said to me, says she, "'You're a-going out; you're not a-going Adelphi ways, are you?'

"'No,' said I, 'I'm going into the Park with the children.'

"'Drat it!' she said, 'here's a parcel I promised

to take to John Street, Adelphi, yesterday, and I can't get out for them new lodgers I'm expecting every minute, and I can't send the maid, for the same reason.'

"'Is it anything of consequence?' I asked.

"'Yes,' she said. 'It's some papers for a lawyer there, that young Mr. Hartley left when he went away, begging I'd deliver them myself.'

"'Well,' said I, 'I've been wanting to go as far as Fleet Street, to call on a person I know there, and I don't care if I do it to-day, so I'll leave your parcel as I go along.'

"So she thanked me, and away I went. That pain's coming again. Isn't it time I took them drops?"

"You'd better lie still a bit, and tell me the rest by-and-by," said David.

Having entered on her confession, however, she was impatient to relieve herself of the secret, and as soon as she had gathered strength, she proceeded to say that it was on that day she had remarked a child playing about the steps of a door, apparently of the same age as her charge, and bearing a remarkable resemblance to him.

"Well," she said, "when Master Charles was

dead and buried, I couldn't get that child out of my head, do what I would. Somehow, when I thought of that boy, it seemed as if he wasn't dead, after all, and I felt as if somebody was driving me to go to the Adelphi, and see if he was still there. And there he was, sure enough; for it was fine, warm, summer weather, and the door being open, he seemed to be allowed to play upon the step as he liked.

"Well, the more I saw of him, the more I thought what a thing it would be for me, and for Helen, if I could get him instead of the one that was gone; and for the Major, too, for if he didn't know the difference, what would it signify to him? And no doubt the child belonged to some poor person, who perhaps had much ado to keep him; for I thought then he belonged to one of the servants in the hotel."

"And who did he belong to?"

"I'll tell you when I come to it. Well, one day, as I was agoing there, just to take a look at him, Helen saw a toy in a shop-window, that she took a great fancy to; so I bought it for her, and as she was dragging it along—for it was a little carriage on wheels—what should the child do, but



with me, I'll buy you just such a
taking him by the hand, I led him
shop that was in the Strand. I do
I had no intention of stealing the c
and if we had met anybody that cl
should have said I was only going
the toy; but we didn't meet anybo
we came out of the shop, I walked
till we came to Charing Cross, and
a coach, and got into it, and I told th
to Oxford Street. And as we went
thought myself of what I should do
got the child so easy, almost without
so that it seemed just like a Provid
like to give him up again; and I
worst come to the worst, I could have
him in the street, and had taken h

and for Helen to get used to him, as she was to Master Lawrence; and it happened lucky, that when Master Lawrence sickened, I had sent her away to my cousin Renton's, at Hampstead, for change of air; and when I got her back, poor thing, I only told her Master Charles was gone to see his poor mamma. She was puzzled at first, but she soon got used to the little stranger, and seemed to think it was Master Lawrence, as I told her it was."

This story was told with many breaks and rests, and occasional tears; but as David took it more kindly than she had expected, her remorse was somewhat deadened. She afterwards related, that after providing the child with a hat and change of clothes, at a shop in Oxford Street, she had carried him to a friend of hers in the Edgeware Road, whom she requested to take care of him and Helen for a couple of days, under pretence that there was a fever in the house she was lodging in, and that she must seek another. In the meantime, she took apartments in that neighbourhood; and telling Mrs. Smithers she was going to leave London, she removed herself and her belongings thither,

and then took the children home, where their infantile minds soon forgot the past.

Little Willie Gibson—for, of course, it was he—was too young to comprehend the change, or to feel it beyond the first twenty-four hours; and to Helen he filled the place of Master Lawrence, by which name, of course, he was called, so completely, that she soon forgot the little perplexity that had at first assailed her; and by the time Mrs. Driscoll received orders to proceed to Brighton, the whole scheme was so perfected, and all parties concerned were so well up in their parts, that there was neither difficulty, nor danger, in introducing



CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. DRISCOLL was not a whit better than the ordinary run of women of her class, and she had hitherto acted with that reasonable degree of honesty, combined with a due attention to her own interests, that we commonly meet with in such persons; but the strong temptation came, and led her astray. All her fortunes and schemes for the future, rested on the life of the child; and the best quality she had, her maternal affection, helped to seduce her into the criminal act she had been guilty of.

As long as she did not know to whom the infant she had kidnapped belonged, her remorse planted few thorns in her pillow; but the sight of Agnes

had awakened some uncomfortable feelings. A fond parent herself, she understood the bereaved mother's anguish; and although self-preservation forbade restitution, she often regretted, if not the crime which had prospered so well, at least, that the suffering should have fallen on one so sensitive. But there was nothing to be done. She could not risk the ruin and destruction that would follow on confession, and she soothed her conscience, as well as she could, with the idea, that she had improved the child's condition; rescuing him, perhaps, from abject poverty, to make him the cherished son and heir of an affluent father.

But other anxieties assailed her. Agnes was gone to France, but her absence was to be temporary. She might return as she went, and there was not a packet came in that might not bring her.

Mrs. Driscoll lived in terror of a second meeting, and even walking out with the children, especially

But now a new and very unforeseen event came
disturb her. She was unwell with a severe fit
influenza, and had engaged a girl to take care
her children, when one day the postman brought
a letter. It was from Mrs. Archibald Law-
ce, and was to the effect that the Major's regi-
nt had been ordered home quite unexpectedly,
that Mrs. Driscoll and the child must return
ediately to Brighton. But Mrs. Driscoll not
g in a state to travel, Mrs. Tomkins was sent
o fetch the boy, whom his supposed father
to his arms and heart without a suspicion,
ugh he avowed he thought him so much al-
, that he should not have known him.
a the whole, Mrs. Driscoll was not sorry to be
at from so critical a meeting, which she soon
ed, to her great satisfaction, had been ex-
ely gratifying to the father. Of course, the
did not know him—that was out of the ques-
; but he was handsome and healthy, and all
a parent could desire.
Irs. Driscoll's only *bête noire* now was Agnes,
the possibility of her falling in somewhere
the child; but in the meantime, the influenza
taking an ugly turn, and she was troubled by a



[illegible] arrival that he was amazed [illegible]

However, the pain in the side go with returning health the remorse fa occupied herself with writing the l lately left Agnes weeping over; wherei the mother, that her child was safe a would be brought up as the son of and inherit a fortune. "But," she ad never see him again; and if you try, lead to mischief, for the gentleman li parts, and the child's gone to hir water."

It was easy to discover Martha's add her own sister, and having dispatched she felt she had discharged a duty, and spirits; the more especially as Maj when she joined him at Brighton, e

should rejoin his regiment; previous to which proposed to stay a few weeks in London.

"And I suppose you'll go and see your handne widow?" said Mrs. Archibald, smiling.

"I feel I ought to call," answered Major Lawce, "since she was so kind as to invite me."

"Certainly; I know of no reason why you uld not; but widows are proverbially danger- you know. Take care of your heart."

he Major answered that his heart was buried he grave of his lost Eliza; and having secured place in the Highflyer, and packed up his portteau, he started straightway for the great

When he had paid his visit to the Horse rds, and settled a few other matters of business, one morning, after taking a careful survey of self in the glass, turned his steps in the direc- of Russell Square, where he knocked at the r of our old acquaintance, Mrs. Aymer, who, will be remembered, had accompanied her hus- d on a voyage to Jamaica, where circumstances nected with his property rendered his presence essary. She went a wife, but returned a widow, the same vessel with Major Lawrence, who was

not a little struck by her personal attractions and agreeable manners.

Mrs. Aymer was now mistress of herself, and through her husband's liberality, the possessor of a handsome fortune; but she was still alone—she had no friends or companions. Mr. Aymer's relations detested her, if possible, more than when he was alive; and the people she had known in her former condition she had necessarily dropped, or lost sight of.

In this splendid solitude, her mind reverted to Agnes, whose story had interested her feelings, and in whom she had found a companion to

he had taken what is called *a serious turn*; that is, he forswore billiards and balls, shook his head at the light talk of his former companions, read prayers to his valet, acquired new views of sin, and set about working out his own salvation by a constant attendance at chapel, and a reverent attention to the grace before and after meat. In other respects, he was exactly the same man he had been before, his conversion being all upon the surface; but he did not know that himself. Like the world in general, he mistook forms for realities, and thought to please God Almighty by genuflexions.

This *serious* temper of mind was a phenomenon Mrs. Aymer had never come athwart, and had it been exhibited by her husband, she would probably have given its manifestations a very unsympathetic reception; but what would have displeased her in the uninteresting little West Indian merchant, bore a different aspect in the gallant Major; so that when, on board the packet, he read prayers and sermons on a Sunday, and talked to her about the other world on a week day, she found herself lending a patient ear to his discourses, and even occasionally making an effort to emulate feelings which, he assured her, since the death of his lost Eliza,

afforded him the only satisfaction he was ca
pable of.

But this new-born flame was too feeble to kee
alive by itself, and after they parted at Portsmouth
and the neophyte came to London, it scarcel
survived a week; so that, when the Major arrive
in Russell Square, he found his fellow-passenger
anything but a state of grace, though exactly in
state most open to receive it; for, in the midst
luxury and abundance, she was dissatisfied a
unhappy. Eminently sociable by nature, life to h
without companionship was wretchedness; and, pr
vided she had had a flourishing business th
secured her from much self-denial, she would rath

affluence that surrounded her; for serious people are by no means less influenced by external advantages than those reputed more lax.

As Major Lawrence, under his present vocation, thought it proper to drop a word in season on all occasions, it was not long before an opportunity presented itself of remarking on the insufficiency of all worldly prosperity to afford happiness; an observation that came so completely home to Mrs. Aymer's bosom, that she acceded to it with a heartfelt sincerity that there was no mistaking.

"I am sure I feel it so, daily and hourly," she said. "I dare say there are many people who, seeing how I am situated here, would envy me, and think I ought to be very happy—but I am not; and yet I have good health, and every comfort in life that any one need desire."

"These are the instances I find so instructive," said Major Lawrence, "because I am sure the natural cheerfulness of your disposition would dispose you to contentment; but there is no real contentment in this life, be assured, from any source but one. We may sometimes deceive ourselves in the heyday of prosperity, but the first

sorrow that reaches us shows that we have been building our house upon the sands."

"I have no doubt what you say is true," returned Mrs. Aymer; "but I have always heard people must have a vocation, and I am afraid I have not one."

"Seek and you shall find, my dear Madam," said the Major; "and I am sure, if I can be of any use to you, nothing would afford me greater pleasure."

CHAPTER IX.

We left Leighton after his interview with Mr. Watson, on the day of Lionel's death, or, at least, on the day it became known, replete with a sense of having something to do that was to help himself, though he could not see how he was to set about it, nor indeed what it was he was to set about. His head was in that state of excitement and confusion, that is not unfrequently produced by a piece of unexpected good news, which has thrown us off our equilibrium; and, in order to find some vent for the unusual effervescence, he proceeded to pay a visit to his new acquaintance, Tom Patton.

Tom was out, exercising his horses in the Champs Elysées; but he found Christie, his wife, at home,



she held up her hands with amazement.

"The Lord deliver us!" she exclaime
whole course of my life, I never hear
thing. How could anybody find in the
to sell such a beast? Surely they co
what sort he was!"

"I don't know that," answered Le
was too full of his subject to keep his
himself; "I think it's been a conspirac

"A what?" said Mrs. Patton.

"I believe them that sold the horse
well what they were doing."

"You don't suppose they had a de
poor gentleman's life, I hope?"

"Well, I do," said Leighton; "fo
one concerned in the business, if I'm n
that'll be a good deal the better of what

extract from the overcharged visitor all he knew and thought.

"God help the innocent babe!" exclaimed Mrs. Patton, "that stands betwixt that villain and the fortune! How do you know it wasn't him that broke into the house that night, and stabbed the gentleman, that you got put into prison for? I shouldn't wonder. He's as like to do one as t'other."

The blood rushed into Leighton's face at this suggestion, for it was a thought that had been haunting him for the last half hour—that is to say, ever since he left Mr. Watson's lodgings; but which he had pertinaciously driven away as something absurd and extravagant, and, in short, too good to be true.

"I don't know," he answered. "It came into my head too, but I can't think he would venture such a thing as that."

"There's no telling what such fellows as that'll venture, after money," returned Mrs. Patton; "and if he'd killed the gentleman on the spot, he couldn't have told no tales, you know." And Leighton went away fortified in his suspicions, and resolved to do something, though still he knew not what.

About a fortnight after Lionel's death, Isabel

Grosvenor was sitting on a low ottoman, at the [redacted] of Miss Dacres, who, still an invalid, reclined [redacted] her arm-chair. The penitent had just concluded the history of her flight from home, and h[redacted] return, alluding slightly to what had occurr[redacted] during the interval of her absence.

"You see," said she, "it would be in vain to te[redacted] Georgina, or anybody else, that my meeting wit[redacted] Agnes was an accident; they wouldn't believe it. People think such things only happen in plays and novels; yet it *was* an accident; and, setting aside my desperate resolution of drowning myself, I couldn't help what occurred afterwards, being too ill to do anything."

"But, my dear child, the astounding incident of the whole drama, to me, is your permitting that strange man to take you where he pleased! Good God! suppose he had been some villain, of whom there are so many in every city!"

"Oh! but I saw he was not."

[redacted]

confidence: you know it's impossible to
hose things. But if you had heard his
t reproof to the men that were insulting me,
how he took me under one arm, whilst he
m back with the other, you would under-
perfectly. There was such a sense of power,
nity, and truth, that I could never have
him."

nfess, I can't understand it, my dear, the
he world. I understand your flight, how-
ng I think it; for it seems to me much
nple to have told your mamma that you
t marry Sir Abraham, than to throw your-
the river to avoid him."

aunt, but you know I never could oppose
s will, except by getting away from her;
way I had committed myself about Co-
tchison had given her such a power over

n't think you were at all in fault with re-
Colonel Aitchison. He is a selfish egotist,
think you were very fortunate to escape

s in fault to attach myself so much to such



of it, I assure you."

"You'll be wiser another time; but, these terrible adventures of yours, and t what did you say his name is?"

"Mr. Capel. And you must reme that when I rushed up to him, and protection, I was wild with terror."

"That is a much better excuse tha describable qualifications you attribute t pray, did you ever see him afterwards?"

"Oh, yes, frequently. He lodged Hôtel Garni that Agnes did."

"And who and what was he?"

"I don't know exactly; but, howe not been able to adopt his father's pr they consequently had not agreed ver

pense for the service he did you; for it certainly was well meant on his part, however *inconvenable.*"

"Oh, no! I wouldn't do such a thing for the world. You wouldn't think of it, if you knew him. He may be poor, but he is a —"

"Well, what is he?"

"Well, aunt, I know you'll laugh at me—but it's quite an exceptional case—he is not the least like anybody I ever saw."

"Where is he now?"

"In Paris, I suppose; but I don't know."

"And you have no expectation of seeing him again?"

"None," answered Isabel, with an involuntary sigh, as she uttered the word.

"That relieves me," said Miss Dacres, "for I was really frightened. When romantic young ladies begin to talk of *exceptional cases,* I know what it means very well. Depend on it, my dear child, such exceptional cases are the offspring of your own imaginations. The young man you speak of may be a very respectable, and a very well-informed person, but he cannot be a gentle-

man; the circumstances of his life preclude that. Your gratitude and enthusiasm beguile your judgment."

"Well, aunt, it's in vain to discuss, where we cannot convince. You are the best little aunty in the world—Heaven knows I have reason to say so; but you have always lived amongst people of a certain class, and you have no idea of any other. We cannot conceive what we have never seen anything like, and you have never seen anything like Mr. Capel. I never had before, and perhaps I should have been as unbelieving as you. Did you ever form any idea of what a poet would be?"

too much for me. In spite of all your goodness, you are in one respect like mamma—you acknowledge but one class of people in the world."

"Not as companions, certainly. But I should be very sorry if I did not acknowledge the poor and ignorant as my fellow-creatures, to whom I am bound to do all the good I can."

"The poor and ignorant! I should not like such company either; but Mr. Capel is the farthest removed from ignorance of any person I ever spoke to in my life. He seemed to me to know everything better than anybody else I ever heard converse; and you can have no idea, aunt, of the effect of such high cultivation on a man's whole being and bearing. It seemed to inspire him with a noble confidence, which supplied that ease of manner and self-possession, that more ordinary mortals only acquire by *usage*. However, I see I vex you, dear aunty, and I ought not to expect you to believe anything so apocryphal as this account of my *rara avis;* but I owe him so much, and I do so entirely think all I have said of him, that it would have been base in me to shrink from avowing it. And now I have something else to tell you, that I know will give you a great deal of pain, as, Heaven knows,

it has me; but, in justice to Agnes, I must not conceal it."

"I don't believe a word of it," said Miss Dacres, when she had heard the history of Lionel's secret marriage.

"I wish I did not," returned Isabel.

"It's very natural that Agnes Crawfurd should try to excuse herself, by getting up such a story; but I can never believe that Lionel would be guilty of so infamous an action," said Miss Dacres; and as it was impossible to transfer to her the confidence in Agnes's veracity that she felt herself, Isabel forbore to insist.

"I am not surprised at your doubts," she re-

Isabel's mind was ever straying back to the *petit appartement* in the Rue Joubert, and, in spite of the extreme improbability of the thing, she could not help indulging vague hopes of seeing the young student again. How and where they were to meet, she could not tell; but, in all her visions of the future, there was his image the prominent figure in the piece. And it was this persuasion that kept up her spirits, and enabled her to fling the past behind her, with its trials and vexations.

Secluded from all society, she devoted herself to Miss Dacres, who forbore to reproach her; for, in spite of her prejudices, she was one of the best of human beings; and for the rest, she lived in a dream of some blessed chance which was infallibly to reunite her to Mr. Capel, on whose irresistible perfections she relied to effect her aunt's conversion.

In the meantime, Lady Georgina had arrived at Ravenscliffe, where she had raised a storm of horror and indignation, by the account of Isabel's adventures, and of the part played in the drama by Agnes Crawfurd, who, they concluded at once, had gone to Paris in pursuit of Lionel. But as that connexion, and the birth of the child, formed a

chapter in her husband's history that had been
fully concealed from Lady Georgina, this sub
was not alluded to in her presence; neithe
Isabel's name ever mentioned in the family *réu*
No doubt Lady Grosvenor suffered, for, with s
pride and her worldliness, she was not dev
maternal affection; but Isabel had wounde
most severely in those two most sensitive p
and the love was not strong enough to conqu
resentment.

Sir Francis was slowly drooping into the
but he missed his favourite daughter, and in
on being attired in mourning.

Mrs. Damer found nothing in her own

much concerned; but when they came to have a family, the deep interest they both felt in the welfare of their children formed a source of perpetual strife. From the pap to the piano, everything was a subject of dispute.

Mr. Langham was not naturally an obstinate man, but he had taken it into his head that his wife despised his understanding, and it was quite true, that when she grew bitter in argument, and eager to seize any weapon she could clutch to wound her opponent, she often hit him on that tender point.

Fatal mistake! From the moment that persuasion seized him, his whole character seemed to change. When he took up an opinion, right or wrong, nothing would move him. He grew as arbitrary as a Turkish Pasha; and when he had said a thing should be done, done it must be, although his wife could prove to demonstration that it had better be left alone.

Passionate in her affections, she was a passionate mother; and when Mr. Langham, in ignorance or haste, issued an order regarding the children which she disapproved, the most violent altercations ensued; in which, let her better resolutions be what

they might, she was sure, when she fou
impervious to argument, to arraign hi
standing in some form or another; till a
under the influence of extreme irritation,
afternoon ordered his horse, and rode av
his own door, with the determination of nev
ing it again. All day she expected his ret
he came not; but by-and-by there arrive
from his solicitor, desiring his servant to
in London; and another, addressed to Mr
ham, announcing her husband's intention
ing her, henceforth, a separate maintenance

CHAPTER X.

The anonymous letter received by Agnes had considerably augmented her affliction. It was true that the situation and prospects of her beloved child were fairer than she could have ventured to imagine, but the extinction of all hope of recovering him was a terrible counterbalance to this advantage. As she said, she did not know how much she had hoped, till that letter wrenched all hope from her.

However, as she was naturally industrious and had her bread to earn, Agnes did not sit with her hands before her and weep; but as soon as she had recovered the first shock of the intelligence, she sought work, and employed herself, her old acquaintance, Sarah, standing her friend as before.

As for John Gibson, he was as devoted as ever
was indeed attached to the sisters by a new
Martha's quiet virtues had won his honest l
and although Agnes was still his goddess, the
was to be his cherished wife as soon as ci
stances permitted of their union.

Poor Sarah's rough face was suffused
blushes, of too deep a hue to be becoming,
she learnt that her own hopes were blighted
at first she flouted John, and discontinue
civilities to Martha; but when Agnes re
from her unsuccessful expedition, to meet ill
at home, the kind nature prevailed, and conq
her feelings, she resumed her former friendly

"I thought you'd have given me a call before
is," said the latter; "but as you didn't, I told
ewson I was determined to come and find you
t. My husband only came back on Thursday,
d we've taken a lodging for the present, till we
n find a place to suit us."

"You're looking for a situation, then?" said
nes.

"We're not going to service again," said Mrs.
wson, who seemed desirous of communicating
t which engrossed her own mind. "We're
nking of going into the public line, and we're
king for a house with a good business, some-
ere about this part of the town."

As this remark was rather in John's way, he
ined in the conversation, observing on the good
d bad localities for enterprizes of such a nature;
ding, that it required a good bit of money to
o into such a house and get everything tight
out you.

"No doubt," said Hewson; "and I'm not sure
at it wouldn't be wiser to put our money in the
nk and go to service again, than risk it in busi-
ss; but my wife here's bent on going into busi-
ss for ourselves. Her father was in that line,

and she tells me she knows all about that sor
of business,—which is more than I do."

"Why, look here, Mrs. Gibson," said the wif
who seized the opportunity of letting out her secre
we've got a matter of five hundred pounds left
in a legacy, and wouldn't it be a sin and a shan
to let it lie idle instead of making it a nest-e
to bring more?"

"Ay, but if so be we should lose it in trying
get more?" said Hewson.

"Nonsense! Nobody'd ever venture anythi
if they always looked to the wrong side of thi
as you do," returned the wife. "Many a o
rode in their coach that began with no more
we've got."

"That's true, no doubt," said John.
heerd that Alderman Hunter come'd up fro
land a-foot, and had to beg his way along th
and now he's so rich, that it's said he'll
Mayor this next year."

"Hark to that, Hewson. Who can te
may be Lord Mayor, and ride in your co
you die, if you look sharp?" But He
his head; he was evidently not of a sang
sition. "I'll tell you what, Mrs. Gibson

wife, "if it hadn't been for me, he'd have been eated out of a good part of what we've got, just cause he wouldn't go down to Bristol, to look ter it. He said he was sure there would be thing coming to him, and that he should only ok like a fool if he went; but I never rested till I got him off; and lucky it was I did. You can't eny that, Hewson."

Hewson did not deny it; but he said he knew how long it had taken the old man, his uncle, to save such a sum of money, and that it would be a shocking thing for him to go and kick it all down before he was well cold in his grave.

John said it would be a pity, certainly, for trade was a thing not to be counted on, and it was easier to lose five hundred pounds than earn it, work as hard as a man might.

"It wasn't so hard that my uncle worked for it either, for he'd a good easy place of it," said Hewson; "but he was a faithful servant for many years to a gentleman in that part of the country. By the by, his master was the grandfather of the clergyman that read prayers when we was at Deal. You remember, we asked his name."

"The pew-opener said his name was
answered Agnes.

"So it was," returned Hewson. "I t
saw a likeness to the family. His mothe
was Grosvenor."

"Was it?" said Agnes, with some surpr

"And she married Mr. Watson, the
the parish where her father lived; and muc
the old gentleman's will they say it was."

"Watson," said Agnes to herself; "su
was the name the young ladies once n
to me. Did you ever hear if the gentlei
uncle lived with was any relation to Si

the other day. I think his name's Gerard or Gerald, or something of that sort. They say he's steady enough; but the eldest is rather wild, and has never settled to anything."

"It's a very strange thing," said Agnes, when the Hewsons were gone. "If Mr. Watson was a clergyman at that time, I can't make out why the marriage shouldn't have been a real one; and yet it couldn't have been real, or Mr. Grosvenor could never have married Lady Georgina."

"It must have been because you were not asked in church," said Martha. "I have always heard that people must be asked in church, and it was very stupid in me not to think of it."

"However, it don't signify now," said Agnes, with a sigh, which was a signal to the other two to change the conversation.

The next visitor that arrived was Mr. Capel, who had just returned from Paris, bringing with him two letters for Agnes, which he had found lying at the Post Office.

After the usual salutations, he inquired for her friend.

"I know nothing of her," she answered, "ex-

cept what this letter you have brought
tain."

"I thought it was from her," said he
at it with a longing eye, that moved Agı
him that Isabel was in England, and well.

"With her family?"

"She's staying with her aunt," answer
"and sends you her best wishes;" and
his evident disappointment at her rem
uncommunicative, she felt it her duty to
any further information, unless she ha
express directions to the contrary; a l
betwixt Miss Grosvenor and Mr. Capel
to her as discrepant as her own with t

ears tingling, because, whilst she wondered and admired, she was often unable to follow him, he frequently sunk into silence and abstraction, and it was evidently more an effort than a pleasure to converse.

The other letter was from Mrs Aymer, the one written under the influence of that oppressive sense of loneliness that had been the thorn in her well-stuffed pillow ever since she married the rich West Indian.

But since that was dispatched, matters had changed; she was now revelling in all the honours and glories of a conversion, and hourly rejoiced over by saints upon earth, in long bonnets and scanty skirts. She had prayer-meetings in her drawing-room, and grave consultations with gentlemen in broad-brimmed hats in her *boudoir*, for she was already up to her ears in the conversion of the Jews, and very busy about the souls of the heathen in the far islands of the Pacific. She was a happy woman now, and so she told her new friends, drawing tears of holy joy from their benevolent eyes by the confession, that she had never known what real happiness was before.

At the same time, Major Lawrence grew daily



became a subject of the deepest intere
and when Mrs. Driscoll saw which wa
blew, she seized every opportunity of rec
herself to this new power. In short,
wealth and her conversion, the befor
Mrs. Aymer suddenly found herself sur
admiring friends, the brightest star of
in which she moved.

It was just in this crisis of her pros
tunes that Agnes, one day, attiring he
best silk gown and smartest bonnet, set
her friendly fellow-traveller, for whom,
the small sympathy betwixt their char
still had a liking; so she bade Martha
prised if she did not return till night.

"If Mrs. Aymer asks me to spend th
her, I shall."

But that was not it. When Agnes reached the use, there was a carriage standing at the door, d with her usual dislike to intrude herself into company of her superiors—or of those who uld let her see that they thought themselves so, that was the real key to her humility—she ssed over to the other side, and walked up and n till she should see the visitors depart.

y-and-by, the door opened, and a gentleman e out, leading by the hand a little boy, who the man lifted into the carriage; the gentleman ped in after him, and they drove away. When nes observed this from a little distance, she ssed over and gave a doubtful double knock at door, the diffidence of which could not fail to pire the footman with contempt; and, accordly, the door was opened in a manner that would e prepared any experienced caller for a denial.

"Is Mrs. Aymer at home?" asked Agnes.

"No:—at least, I don't think she is," answered man, examining her from head to foot.

Oh, very well; say Mrs. Gibson called, if you se;" and repenting of her boldness, she pred to retreat.

"Stay, I'll inquire," said the man; "what name did you say?"

"Gibson—Mrs. Gibson," reiterated Agnes, as he ascended the drawing-room stairs with the deliberate *nonchalance* that became him.

"Missus is not at home," said he, presently, as he came down again, and shut the door in her face.

The visitor had arrived when her company was no more needed. Besides, the reminiscences of Paris and her own confessions rendered Agnes too dangerous an acquaintance to be encouraged under present circumstances, and in spite of her good nature, Mrs. Aymer had the fortitude to cut her friend inexorably. As she believed herself sincere

after the ceremony, the happy couple, accompanied by David Driscoll with his wife and the two children, proceeded to the North, where the Major's family resided, and where lay an estate of some five thousand a-year, which, sooner or later, the bridegroom must inherit. In the meantime, however, his fortune being rather limited, the widow's wealth was no unacceptable addition; and that and her serious views being all that were known to the Major's connexions, her reception was so gratifying, that she persuaded her doating husband to sell his commission and settle finally in that part of the country.

CHAPTER XI.

DESIROUS as Leighton was to keep his eye on Mr. Lewis Watson and pursue the investigation

her husband to recommend him to a livery-
le-keeper, who employed him about odd jobs,
etimes to rub down a horse and sometimes to
e one. Under these circumstances, he lost
t of Mr. Watson, whom he had left in Paris;
although his mind was constantly reverting to
mystery of that gentleman's motives, and his de-
to penetrate them was in no degree diminished,
was obliged to relinquish the inquiry till better
es, if any such were in store for him.

n the meantime, Mr. Watson was not without
own difficulties. Persuaded against all likeli-
d that he should one day or other inherit the
tes of the elder branch of his family, he could
er bring himself to do anything towards earning
for himself. Circumstances were now certainly
ning out more favourably for him than could
onably have been expected. Fortune appeared
be taking his part, but *en attendant,* he was
se off than ever he had been. His father, who
died lately, had left nothing. He never had
anything but his preferment, and though it
a good one, he had lived up to the income it
duced him. During his lifetime there had been
le intercourse betwixt Colonel Grosvenor and his

daughter, for the old man hated her husband, and was as indignant as Sir Francis that she should have married a person with such a plebeian appellation. When his son-in-law died, however, he took his daughter home to live with him; but as he had never had more than the usual portion of a younger son in addition to his pay, he was a poor man and had little to spare. Nevertheless, he had done what he could for his grandsons; and he and Mr. Watson, the father, had repeatedly advanced sums for the purpose of establishing the elder in some way of life that should furnish the means of his support; but the money always went for very different purposes to those it was intended for.

not; but that might not have stood much in his way, had not his idleness and disinclination for study altogether precluded his passing an examination in Latin and Greek. However, he found his residence at college agreeable enough, and in the event very profitable. Indeed, it was not without a view to other advantages than those of study, that, after he had turned his back upon various professions, his father consented to send him to Oxford, whither the young heir of Ravenscliffe had just repaired, not to read, but to ride.

An acquaintance betwixt the cousins was much to be desired, and if well managed, might prove extremely advantageous to the two young men; and we have seen what use Lewis made of the opportunity. Gerald, on the contrary, who was farther removed from the fortune and quite in earnest regarding the Church, thought it much more his interest to read assiduously for orders and get a living from the present Baronet, than to waste his time in courting the future one; and accordingly, it was with some unwillingness that he lent himself as an instrument in the affair of the marriage; a compliance, indeed, to which nothing

would have won him, had he not been assured of of its being the evident interest of all parties concerned to keep the thing a profound secret as long as Sir Francis Grosvenor lived.

Under these circumstances, it did not appear a very bad card to play; for though not so far-seeing as his brother, he was not unwilling to purchase at such an easy price the good-will of the heir of Ravenscliffe. It was well to have the two strings to his bow. But Lewis's contriving genius had looked far deeper into the game. He was well aware of the grief and disappointment the tardy appearance of an heir had occasioned Sir Francis, and he felt sure that no time would be lost in

when he found this juvenile passion was likely to terminate in a marriage, new lights began to dawn upon him.

Lionel Grosvenor was notoriously incautious; he was fond of boating, and had been two or three times nearly drowned; and a very bad horseman, he would ride steeple-chases, mounted on any animal he took a fancy to, fit or unfit for the purpose. Advice was useless, for he never followed it. Under these circumstances, Watson considered his own chance a good one, provided the young man could be kept single for a few years, but that being a feat not easily accomplished, the next best thing was, that he should marry Agnes.

Incapable of a lasting attachment, volatile and unstable, it was not likely that his love would long survive the marriage ceremony; and it was pretty certain that no sacrifices or inconveniences would be submitted to from a sense of duty. When inclination died, the bond would be broken, and Lionel would be a married man without a wife. So well did Watson understand the character he had to deal with, that he even foresaw the possibility of what ultimately happened, namely, that if he could shake off Agnes, he would allow himself to be per-

suaded into another marriage; but that second marriage, if it took place during Agnes's lifetime, would be invalid and the offspring of it illegitimate.

To use his own phrase, "What a capital look-out!"

In order to invalidate the second marriage, however, he must have it in his power to prove the first whenever it became advisable for him to do so; on this account, he was well pleased that Gerald should perform the ceremony, and he advised Lionel to demand a certificate, which certificate he intended to have in his own keeping, but from

would try to obtain the custody of this momentous document, it might fall into the hands of Sir Francis, and then there would be no living for the young deacon. The certificate must, therefore, on all accounts be obtained, and accordingly, one morning, when the two young men were at breakfast, Watson said, "By the by, what have you done with the certificate? I hope you haven't lost it?"

"Oh, no, I have it safe," answered Lionel, drawing it from his pocket and laying it beside him.

"You had better give it me," said the other. "It will be much safer than with you. Besides, suppose your father gets hold of it; there'd be the devil to pay."

"I'll take care he shan't," said Lionel; "besides, I promised to show it *her*."

"But you're so careless about your papers. I'm sure, when you were at Oxford, I might have read every letter you had, if I had chosen."

"I dare say; but I didn't care whether you did or not."

"Of course, I did *not*," answered Watson: "but you know how curious servants are; and suppose

any of them got a sight of that, wouldn't they tell the old gentleman."

"I'll lock it up in the box where I keep my money. Nobody ever opens that but myself."

"How do you know?"

"For the best reason in the world; it has a Bramah lock, and I have the key fastened to my watch-chain. There it is; I had it gilt on purpose that I might wear it so. I'll lock it up at once, for fear of accidents," and thus saying, he rose, and taking the paper, went into his dressing-room, followed by Watson.

"This is it," said he, opening a square ebony box inlaid with ivory, and displaying the contents

ng-case with a Bramah, and the key left behind when you want to dress for dinner."

"But I can't well leave mine behind; besides, I've a second key. By the by, where is that key, I wonder;" and he began tossing over the papers to look for it. "Oh, here it is!"

"Excellent!" exclaimed his cousin. "I can't imagine anything more ingenious. Locked up here, this second key would be of great use to you, if you had lost the first."

Lionel laughed. "Why, one don't like to leave it about, you know, or somebody might get hold of it," and as he held it in his hand, he looked round the room to see where he could place it in safety, whilst his cousin watched him with a curious eye.

"This will do," said Lionel; nobody will ever think of looking for it here;" and so saying, he advanced towards a book-case where there were some small drawers, filled with curiosities, coins, geological specimens, and so forth, carefully arranged. "Nobody ever disturbs these," said he, as he wrapped the key in a scrap of paper, and opening one of the drawers, he placed it in the further corner, out of sight, except to those who knew where to seek it.

CHAPTER XII.

WATSON left Ravenscliffe with the avowed intention of taking a run along the coast of Devonshire, before he returned to London.



. We expect to have a capital run with the hounds."

l then I shall see you in London, I sup-

; I shall send *her* up, when I go from nd join her as soon as I can, in Park

ı Mr. Watson took his leave, he did not vay "the key of the tea-chest," but of the oor, to which was attached a patent lock, tra keys, two of which were for the use of n and Mr. Grosvenor, who kept them in ckets, and let themselves in and out at their ; they being the only inhabitants of the n which Lionel's apartments were situated. he had a visitor, he generally gave them a o, that they might enjoy the same privilege access; that is, in the winter, for in the the outer door was generally open. As ra key was one only used on such occasions, not very likely to be missed, and even if it hat was more likely than that a man should such a trifle, and carry it away in his

three days that were to intervene before

that of Lionel's departure for Tower Hill, were spent by Mr. Watson as he had proposed; but on that afternoon he returned to C——, where he put up at an obscure inn, that he had observed outside the town, as he passed through. From thence, an hour's good walking would take him to Ravenscliffe; and leaving his portmanteau, and a young pointer puppy of a very valuable breed, that Lionel had given him, he set out on his expedition, provided with his two keys, intending to be back time enough to be taken up by the London coach, as it passed through.

By crossing a field, and leaping a dyke, he could

w it extinguished, and then cautiously inserted
i key, and made his entry by the aid of a dark
ıtern, with which he had provided himself at
eter.

As the rooms were separated by double doors,
d the windows looked into a garden behind, he
ither saw nor heard anything to awaken a sus-
ion of danger; and with scarcely an apprehen-
n of being disturbed, he proceeded deliberately
his business, which was to open the book-case,
d with the small key there deposited unlock the
ony box, and extract the certificate.

The whole process had succeeded to admiration,
the moment that Lionel, preparing to accom-
y Agnes to the coach, had opened the door of
ante-room, to get his great-coat. Alarmed and
ried at the noise, Watson turned to fly, kicking
· and thereby extinguishing his lantern, which
ing his operations he had placed upon the
r; and in an instant more he found himself
ared by Lionel's vigorous grasp.

Nothing had been further from his intentions
n to harm his cousin. Such desperate enter-
es were quite out of his line; but the shame

of being discovered, and the passion that is apt to rise in a man's breast, when engaged in such a struggle, got the better of his prudence, and, in order to free himself, he stabbed him with a weapon that Lionel himself had given him but a few days before—a short sword, sheathed in a walking stick.

As he rushed forth, after committing the act, he passed a woman flying from the same quarter, whose person he could not distinguish, but whom he guessed was Agnes; but this, of course, he did not stop to ascertain, his business being to get as far from the scene of the tragedy as he could. He leaped the dyke, ran across the field into the high road, and, whilst hesitating whether to return for his portmanteau and dog or not, met the coach. This decided him. Speed was everything. He hailed it, got in, and proceeded with it, till symptoms of daylight appeared. Then he thought it

descend, and proceed across the country

line of coaches.

Channel, where he lived for some time a life of extreme terror and anguish, under an assumed name.

That he should be discovered, appeared almost inevitable. Had he had the slightest idea of such a tragical issue, or indeed of committing any act involving himself in danger, he would have made very different arrangements. But now he had left traces of himself at every step; above all, at the inn at C——, where he thought the portmanteau and dog would assuredly lead to his identification; and so they assuredly would, had not suspicion immediately fixed upon the valet, and thus precluded investigations in any other direction.

With what anxiety the fugitive watched the progress of the affair, in the reports of the English newspapers, may be well conceived; and how relieved he felt by the verdict of the jury, fixing the guilt on Leighton; shortly after which event, he ventured to return to England. But, although he now resumed his former mode of life, it was long before he felt himself at ease; the chances of detection appeared yet too numerous, and, above all, from the portmanteau and dog, which still he did not think it advisable to reclaim, hoping that,

as the house he had left them at was of a v
humble class, the host might be content to app
priate the property, without inquiring too curiou
after the owner.

As time advanced, and Lionel recovered,
tranquillity returned. It was true, the certifi
might be missed—that was a contingency he
always reckoned on; but since it was an article
owner could not take any public measures to
cover, he did not foresee much danger to him
from the circumstance.

Lionel's long illness, slow recovery, and con
quent removal to the Continent, however, had p
cluded even the discovery that the paper was
longer where he had placed it. He went a
leaving the ebony box undisturbed, occupied
with his own personal discomfort, and too i
ferent about Agnes, and all connected with h
care or think about the record of a ceremon
no more serious aspect to him now, than

from danger and fill his purse; and as long as his cousin lived, it answered the purpose, more or less. But Lionel was himself extravagant to the greatest degree, and had latterly been not only extremely unwilling, but often unable, to answer these demands; and hence it was that Watson had been eager to co-operate with Atherton in the sale of the horse—an affair that had terminated in a result far beyond his utmost hopes.

Lionel Grosvenor was dead, leaving but one sickly boy betwixt him and the fortune that had been through life his dream and his ruin. He would never, under any circumstances, have been a good man, but he might have dedicated his scheming wits to some profession, and passed through the world decently, if his mother had not, for the first few years of his life, reckoned too securely on the circumstance of Sir Francis having no son to cut out the younger branch of the family. The consequence of these too sanguine expectations was, that when Lionel was born, she not only thought herself and her son extremely ill-used, but could not bring herself to believe but that fate and fortune would come to their aid, and give them back the rights of which they had been so cruelly defrauded; a per-

suasion which, not from design, but from the overflowing of her own weak and foolish discontent, she unfortunately had too successfully instilled into her son.

But though Lionel Grosvenor was dead now, and Watson's prospects for the future looked brighter than ever, his immediate difficulties were terribly augmented; with his cousin he had lost his banker; so he returned, like the prodigal son, to his mother, who was residing with his grandfather, and still as sanguine as ever with respect to the fortune. With all his faults, the extent of which, however, she was unacquainted with, Lewis was her favourite

was his own impression; and he flattered himself he had an insinuating manner and persuasive tongue; but then, he had no money, and his name was *Watson*. The first disadvantage he might have overcome, if it had not been for the second; but he feared "that would stand *devilishly* in his way, with a girl that had money."

Under the name of Grosvenor, he might have made his advances, and won her heart, before she knew whether he was rich or poor; but her first impressions would be so inevitably adverse to Mr. *Watson*, that nothing but a dazzling fortune could possibly efface them.

It was in the course of these deliberations that, for the first time, some new views opened to him in regard to the two widows of his late cousin, which he wondered had not presented themselves earlier. As these ideas crowded on him, he rubbed his forehead, and tried to develop them into shape.

Had his power really died with Lionel? Were there not, on the contrary, two roads to fortune opened to him? neither, indeed, leading to a result so brilliant as the undivided possession of the Grosvenor estates, but either far preferable to lan-

guishing in poverty for years, or even as long as he lived—an alternative that, in spite of his sanguine temperament, his calmer judgment told him was by no means improbable.



CHAPTER XIII.

WELL, then, what was to be done? *Voyons!* His cousin had left two widows, and two children, both sons. The first wife, legitimate, but not believing herself to be so; the second, illegitimate, without knowing it. Now, might it not be possible to become the husband of one of these women, and so make his own fortune? Suppose he discovered where Agnes was, which he might possibly do through the housekeeper at the Adelphi, and told her the truth, saying, "Accept me for your husband, and I'll reclaim and establish your rights," would she agree to the compact? A large proportion of women would do it to escape from poverty or from ambitious motives; considering that he was,

as he flattered himself, not disagreeable; and that, if her child survived, it really became a duty, on her part, to vindicate his claims. Then the child might be dead; and if it were so, Lady Georgina and her boy would be removed out of the way, and his own road to the fortune would be clear, only burthened with a plebeian wife.

But suppose, after he had told her the important secret, she refused to co-operate with him, and preferred prosecuting her claims without his assistance? Then he would be thrown out altogether. She would doubtless find people to assist her, and he would appear in a light at once ridiculous and contemptible. It would be better, therefore, to win her affections, and marry her, before she had any suspicion that she was the legitimate wife of Lionel Grosvenor. It being afterwards proved that she was so, a handsome provision must be made for her; and if the boy could be recovered, he (Lewis Watson) might perhaps be appointed his guardian. But, on the other hand, this provision would only be for her life; and the advantages he sought would cease when she died, and her son was of age.

Then he turned his eyes to Lady Georgina. There was a rich woman, with an enormous fortune of her

and a liberal settlement from her husband's
:. Haughty and proud too! What would be
ffect on such a woman, if, one fine morning,
Lewis Watson sent in his card, and requested
nterview, wherein he informed her that she
no wife, and her son illegitimate! Heavens!
a triumph for him, the tabooed cousin Wat-

He laughed as he thought of it. But,
a barren triumph it would be. He would be
d out of the house, and left to prove his asser-
for the benefit of Agnes and her son. But
l not this proud woman rather purchase his
e at any cost, than submit to such public dis-
and mortification? Doubtless, unless she
woman of high principles, she would. Prin-
were his only bugbear; but if *they* did not
in the way of his scheme, might he not be-
the husband of this wealthy lady, with a hand-
income, secured to him for his life, and the
able certainty of ultimately inheriting Ravens-
if her son died without issue?

nat vistas of pleasure he saw before him, now
his prospect opened to his view! Launched
ll the amusements and delights of fashionable
vith plenty of money, and the position this

alliance would give him! How he had never taken this view of the subject before, he could not think. Everything seemed now so clear, so easy, so certain of success, provided the principles did not thwart him; and that they would, he could scarcely believe. Such Puritanism would be too ridiculous!

"I think Lewis is certainly going to take to something," observed Mrs. Watson to her father, one day, as she saw her son pacing the gravel before the window.

"What do you mean by taking to something?" asked the old gentleman, looking up from his newspaper.

"Why you know, father, I have always lamented that Lewis should allow his great talents to lie idle, for I am certain that there's not a young man in England could have distinguished himself more than Lewis, if he had liked."

"If you had let me make a soldier of him, might have distinguished himself, very possibly I don't see how a civilian is to distinguish himself particularly if his name's Watson."

"He might distinguish himself in the Pulpit, at the Bar, whatever his name was."

The old man shook his head. He was persuad

that there were few, if any, openings to distinction for a man called Watson.

"I don't mean to say," continued the mother, "that Lewis is thinking of the Bar or the Church now—perhaps it's too late—though I've heard of many, not so clever as he, who have taken to professions older than he is, and succeeded very well; and I don't see why he shouldn't do what others have done. But I don't mean that."

"You don't mean what?"

"I don't mean that he is exactly thinking of the Bar or the Church."

"What is he thinking of, then?"

"Ah! there's the question," answered Mrs. Watson, sagaciously; "but I'm sure he's thinking of something."

"Most likely," answered Mr. Grosvenor, as he turned the leaf of his newspaper.

"Ah! but I mean of something particular. You don't observe Lewis as I do: I see a great alteration in him."

"I see nothing at all," said the father, glancing at the young man, as he passed the window, and then resuming his reading.

"He has got some plan in his head, I'm certain;

I know by the way he walks, with his eyes on the ground, and his hands in his pockets. Besides, don't you see how much more cheerful he is this last week?"

"On the contrary, his mind seems to be always absent and *distrait*."

"But that's exactly it; that's when he's forming his plans. I know Lewis, and I'm certain he's got something in his head."

"Perhaps he has heard that Georgina's child has got the measles."

"It's not unlikely he may have them; for I saw in the paper yesterday an extract from the 'West-

spirits, because they've got the measles at Ravenscliffe," said the old gentleman to his grandson, as he entered the room.

"But the boy's not at Ravenscliffe," answered Lewis.

"I didn't say so," interrupted Mrs. Watson; "but the measles and scarlatina *are* raging in that part of the country."

"So I observed," answered the son; "but I have heard it asserted, that it's more frequently robust children that die of the measles than delicate ones."

"But when the measles are complicated with scarlet fever, they're generally very fatal," said Mrs. Watson. "I've known whole families carried off."

"There's no reckoning on these things," said Watson. "It seems all a matter of chance. I believe it's better for a man to make an exertion, and try to do something for himself, than sit with his hands before him, waiting for a piece of luck that may never come."

"Didn't I tell you so?" exclaimed Mrs. Watson to her father, triumphantly. "I was certain Lewis had something in his head."

"What do you suppose I've got in my head, mother?" asked Lewis.

"Ah, it's impossible for me to say what," returned she; "but that you're thinking of something, I'm certain."

"What makes you think so?" he asked, complacently.

"Oh, I've my reasons," she answered. "Never mind what they are; but I see more than people suppose."

"And more than exists, I fancy," said the old man, without raising his eyes.

"I don't understand what you're both talking

"You'll see, in time, I've no doubt," said the mother, nodding her head significantly. "Leave that to him."

"With all my heart; I shan't interfere, I promise you," said the old man, who did not forget that all his grandson's former schemes for exercising these brilliant abilities in the service of the Law or the Church, or whatever else, had terminated in nothing but extracting a good deal of hard cash from his pocket.

"Poor fellow!" sighed Mrs. Watson. "It's very hard, I *must* say."

"Never mind, mother," said Lewis. "It has been my fault hitherto, if I have not succeeded in anything, I know; and it's natural my grandfather should judge the future by the past."

"Pray, may I ask what it is that you *must* say is very hard, Letitia?" inquired Colonel Grosvenor.

"Oh, nothing," answered Mrs. Watson; "only I do think it very wrong to discourage young people. Nobody can do anything, if they are discouraged."

"Who have I discouraged? Who's going to do anything?" inquired Colonel Grosvenor, looking round the room, over his spectacles. "I haven't

heard of anything that's going to be done yet."

"Nor my mother either, Sir," said Lewis; "but she fancies she sees my mind at work about something, and she knows very well the remorse I feel at living here, month after month, in luxury and idleness."

"To be sure I do," echoed Mrs. Watson, who had never heard a word on the subject before.

"And pray, what have you ever lived in but luxury and idleness, here or elsewhere, I should like to know?" returned Colonel Grosvenor, who had certainly some reason to be displeased at all these

and began at the top of the new page. The first sound interrupting the silence that ensued, was a heavy sigh that seemed, as it issued, to convulse the breast of Mr. Lewis Watson, who was walking up and down the room; whereupon his mother heaved another, that might have swelled the mainsail of a small boat. The corners of the Colonel's mouth contracted; he suspected there was a conspiracy against his purse.

There was no conspiracy thus far, however, only a remarkable sympathy betwixt the mother and son.

"Lewis, dear, as soon as I have done this scollop, suppose you come and take a stroll with me down to the Mill, will you? I see you're not looking well, and it will do you good."

"You'll find me in the garden," answered the young man, in a subdued tone of voice, as he quitted the room, picking up the Colonel's shagreen spectacle-case from the floor, as he passed, and laying it respectfully on the table beside him.

After a few repetitions of the foregoing scene, Colonel Grosvenor, who began to weary of the thing, said to his daughter, one day:

"I should like to know, Letitia, what's the meaning of all this indirect pushing and thrusting—of all these sighs, hints, and inuendos? What is it that you and Lewis want?"

"Oh, nothing," answered Mrs. Watson, searching for her needle-case amidst the litter on the table, as if she had no object in life but to find it.

"Then, if you want nothing, have the goodness to leave off behaving, not only as if you wanted something, but as if you were ill-used in not getting it."

"It's no use wanting what one can't get; but

"It doesn't signify."

"Well, if it does not signify, I request I may hear no more about it."

"You haven't heard anything yet, that I know of; but any one may understand, without being told, what a painful thing it is for a young man, like Lewis, to be wasting his time here doing nothing."

"Then, why does he waste his time? Why don't he do something? Who prevents him?"

"What can he do here, I should like to know?"

"Let him go elsewhere, then."

"He hasn't the means, poor fellow!"

"Humph! I thought so. And pray, if he had the means, where would he go? and what does he expect to do?"

"Ah, that's more than I know—at least, I don't know exactly; but my own opinion is, that Lewis has discovered something."

"Discovered something?"

"Yes; I mean invented something. He's very capable of it."

"Capable of what? What do you mean by inventing something?"

"Well, I don't exactly know; but I mean something like a steam-engine or a balloon, or something

of that sort. Lewis thinks more than people suppose."

"He certainly thinks more than I suppose, if he has invented anything useful; but may I inquire, what grounds you have for this extraordinary supposition?"

"It's so unpleasant to speak to people who never believe what one says; but, whether you choose to believe it or not, I'm positive that Lewis *has* got something in his head."

"So you have been telling me, for the last week; and it is surely very natural that, after hearing so much about it, I should desire to know what it is

"Well, I think he's quite right not to tell you, for you would certainly tell it again to the first acquaintance you met."

"That's what he says. He says I should be so surprised and delighted, that he's sure I couldn't keep the secret; and that it *must* be kept, or it won't succeed."

"Humph! And pray, what is required for the carrying out of this wonderful invention?"

"A mere trifle—only a hundred pounds or so; and if it succeeds, as he's sure it will, he'll be able to pay it all back very soon."

"Devilish bad security!"

"I knew you'd say so."

"I must hear what Lewis himself has to say upon this subject."

"But it's so painful for him to speak about it; because, as he says himself, poor fellow, he can't explain it, so as to inspire others with the confidence he feels; but he says he's sure he shall succeed—something tells him so."

"I dare say it does. Vanity tells him so."

"Well, I *must* say, I don't think that fair! Whatever Lewis's faults may be—and of course, he's not perfect, any more than other people—I never heard him accused of vanity before."

"I can't deny, Sir," said Lewis, when his grandfather interrogated him, "that I think, this time, I have fortune in my grasp. I know my mother is too sanguine, and she thinks too highly of my abilities; but sometimes chance—a lucky hit—will do more than ability. A speculation, of a very singular nature, arising out of a combination of a—"

"A combination of fortuitous atoms, I suppose? Humph! A speculation! I thought it was a steam-engine you'd invented."

"Not exactly; but there is one favourable circumstance attending this undertaking of mine, namely, that it involves no risk of loss. If I suc-

Why, to say the truth," returned the old gentle-
, "I am not very sanguine in my expectations
rer seeing it again, if once I give it you."
I shall only consider it as an advance, Sir—not
ft."
Very much the same thing, I fancy."
I hope you'll not find it so, in this instance,
" answered Lewis, with modest candour. In
't, he was so modest and plausible, that the old
tleman promised him a draft on Cox and Green-
d for the sum he wanted; and two days after-
ds, seated beside the driver of the Bristol High-
r, he proceeded to London. It would have cur-
ed his journey considerably to have crossed the
ntry; but he had business in the metropolis,
: rendered the *détour* necessary.
n the first place, there was his outfit. The
or, the hatter, the bootmaker, the glover, had all
r parts to play in the success of his enterprise.
knew how important it was that Lady Georgina
ıld not be shocked or repelled by any *incon-
nce* in his appearance. Whilst these artists
e engaged in his service, he visited the dentist,
hairdresser, and the ready-made linen ware-
se; so that by the following Sunday he leant
the rail in Hyde Park, with the agreeable

consciousness of presenting an unexceptionable toilet.

His second object in visiting London was to obtain some information regarding Agnes—information he expected to obtain through his old acquaintance, Sarah Peddie; it being of some importance to him to ascertain whether the child had been restored or not. Connecting these inquiries with his present need of a set of unexceptionable shirts, it was not difficult to introduce the subject.

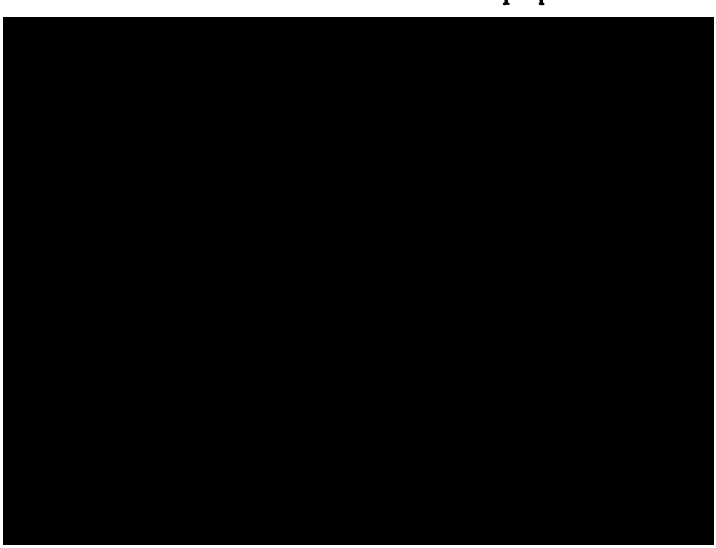
Sarah said, Mrs. Gibson did not make shirts now, nor her sister either. They were entirely in the dress-making line now, poor things!

"By the by, did she ever find that child of hers

No; his game was clearly to marry Lady Georgina; and leaving his bills unpaid in London, with all his appointments complete, and eighty pounds in his pocket, to cut a figure with, he took his place in the mail for T——, in the neighbourhood of which city her Ladyship was residing.

CHAPTER XIV.

When Mr. Lewis Watson arrived in the neighbourhood of Redlands, he quitted the coach and established himself at the inn to prepare for his



Redlands was within a mile of the town, and it was easy to obtain information of her daily habits from Grainger the innkeeper, who said that she not unfrequently drove through the street, in an open carriage, with her son and Dr. Falkner, who had the management of the young gentleman's health and education. Her mother, Lady Minevar, was with her; and her sister-in-law, the Hon. Mrs. Langham had been staying at the castle, but he believed she had left. In answer to Watson's question whether Mr. Langham had also been there, the host shook his head significantly, and answered that he believed he and his wife did not "set their horses well together."

"Redlands was a fine place," Grainger said, "well wooded and watered, and it had always been well kept up. The young heir would come into a grand property if he lived, for her Ladyship had several places besides this, having succeeded to her brother's fortune as well as her own."

Watson inquired if she had not the reputation of being very haughty.

"Them that's about her say so," answered Grainger; "and that she was bringing up the young gentleman to be like herself; but they say Dr. Falkner goes quite another way to work, and that the child's made to speak civil to everybody."

Watson was not sorry she should be haughty, for it was on her haughtiness he risked his hopes of success. A humble and a just woman would refuse to co-operate with him, but he trusted that pride had so far corrupted Lady Georgina's nature, that she would rather stoop to become his wife than submit to the dreadful mortification of yielding up her rights to Agnes.

It was indispensable to his success that nobody should participate in the confidence he was about to make but herself; the admission of any third party, be it who it might, into the secret, would vitiate the whole transaction; and here lay the difficulty. But deliberate as he would, he could find but one

sure he can know nothing of poor Lionel's affairs. Lionel hated him. I've often heard him say he was very sorry he had ever made his acquaintance, which probably he never would, if they had not been at Oxford together."

"I can't see him," said Lady Georgina. "I'm sure he can have nothing to say to me that I want to hear. I shall write and refer him to the agent. Perhaps you'll write a line for me?"

"I expected no less," said Lewis, when he received the answer; "but it won't do, I must try again."

"Here's another note from that man, Louisa," said Lady Georgina. "How excessively importunate and disagreeable. I certainly will not see him!"

"'Of the greatest importance to your Ladyship, that what I have to say should be communicated to no ears but your own.' What can he possibly mean? I suspect it's a trick of some sort to get money. I know he used to borrow money of Lionel. The Watsons are very poor, and I've heard papa say they were a continual drain on the Colonel."

"I wish you'd write and say that I really cannot see him, will you?"



"only don't let me be
perhaps he will refuse t
to you!"

"We shall see," sai
wrote in her sister's nar
on the following day at

"Remember, Barton,
the chambers, "if a g
Watson calls, and asks
show him into the blue
not there let me know."

The fact was, that
a much more active an
Georgina's, had her own
on this occasion. She
possessing any real secre
with her brother, and sh

ing her for Lady Georgina, which she trusted
ld do, he never having seen either of them
knowledge. If he had, the plot might fail;
e would only then be where she was now,
would be discomforted; so she resolved to

Watson looked upon the following day as
st momentous of his life. "To be, or not
' Success or failure! Which awaited him?
it must be, so his genius whispered, for
ure would bring down too much ruin and
e on the house of Ravenscliffe, to be en-
ed when it could be bought off by so small
fice as he required. What pains he took
s toilet that day! How delicately he shaved.
ant's cheek might have rubbed his chin,
t felt its roughness. Into what soft and
neanders he coaxed his dark brown hair!
perfume of Bouquet d'Esterhazy he exhaled!
is linen, his gloves; his whole attire was

He went in a post-chaise lest he should
boots and disorder his complexion; and when
riage dashed up to the door, the *empresse-*
ith which the footman let down the steps
ceded him to the blue room, inspired him
e brightest hopes.

"Mr. Lewis Watson!"

Mr. Watson bowed low, very low, and with great gravity; he had studied everything, and then slowly raised his eyes on a very handsome woman reclining on a *bergère;* a *ruse* of Louisa's, this being Georgina's favourite attitude. She bowed in the most stately manner. This was the trying moment. If he recognized that she was not the person he expected to see, he would say so; he did not, however, but accepted the seat the servant had placed for him before quitting the room.

The truth was, he had never seen her or La Georgina either, except in the Champs Elysé when the ladies were driving together. He reco

Some unfortunate family differences, with
:h personally I have no concern, have estab-
:d a misunderstanding betwixt the two branches,
:h nobody lamented more than my poor cousin
ıel!"

:ere Mr. Watson sighed and gently shook his head.

His feelings towards the junior branch of his
er's house were widely different, as perhaps,
r Ladyship may know—so different, indeed,
: there was probably nobody in the world so
rely in his confidence as myself; and I hope,
: fellow!"—(another sigh)—"he never found
e to repent the trust he reposed in me."

ouisa bowed in a manner that might be inter-
ed into a dignified acquiescence.

There may be," continued Mr. Watson,
rsons in the world, who, situated as I have
—but poorly endowed with the gifts of fortune
ıd at the same time, slighted, rejected, disowned
fear I must use the word, without any fault
ıy own, by those to whom I might, without
undue presumption, have looked for counte-
e and assistance—there may be persons in the
l who might have been tempted to avail them-
:s of the power that confidence conferred, to
dissension and unhappiness—nay, to draw down

ruin on the devoted heads of the beautiful a
innocent: but Lionel slept in peace; he k
was not that man!"

The shrewd Louisa was so little persuade
she felt disposed to clasp her hands an
"brava!" but she only made large eyes and
again, gravely, like a great lady who thin
inferior is dilating somewhat too much o
levant matters. She was exceedingly a
however, and curious for the sequel.

"The subject I have to touch upon," h
tinued, "is so delicate, so strange—I fee
the communication I have to make will fa

"It was at Oxford," he continued, "that my
sin and I first became acquainted. Unin-
enced by family prejudices, he no sooner heard
was there, than he held out his hand to me
d, I think I may say, to know each other was
like each other—we became inseparable. I
n't think Lionel had a secret in the world he
d not tell me. I needn't remind Lady Georgina
at young men *have* secrets, sometimes of a
licate nature; nor that the volatile heart of youth
apt to range from object to object many times
fore it fixes. We were all too much given, I
m afraid, to what is commonly called philan-
ering with the young damsels of the neighbour-
od, but Lionel, though he joined in our frolics,
ed to speak of our belles with contempt. They
ere not worthy, he said, to tie the shoes of a
irl that lived on his father's estate, the daughter
f one of the tenants; and whenever he was called
n for a toast, the name he gave us was *Agnes*
Crawfurd!"

"This is his grand secret," thought Mrs. Lang-
ham; "the old story of Agnes and her child! I
wonder what he thinks to make of it."

"Of course, we thought this nothing but a

boyish fancy, like similar ones of our own; to be superseded in due time by a worthier love," here he bowed, "but I leave your Ladyship to imagine my amazement, when, in process of time, as Lionel and I became better acquainted, I discovered that it was his fixed determination to make that girl his wife."

"His wife! Impossible!" exclaimed Louisa, indignantly.

"I cannot wonder at your doubting it. I couldn't believe him myself when first he confided his intentions to me. I asked him if he was mad! But what avails preaching to a man intoxicated

I beg your pardon; I have never taken orders."

It's impossible! I can't believe it. Agnes wfurd is alive now!"

I am aware of it. She is residing in London the present time. There was a child also by marriage—a son; who is of course the heir Ravenscliffe."

"Impossible!" cried Louisa again; "if what allege were true, she would have claimed her hts."

"She is ignorant of them," returned Watson, ning forward significantly, and placing his finger his lip; "she has been persuaded that her arriage is illegal."

His motive was plain; the quick-witted Mrs. ngham discerned it clearly; he wanted to be ught; but she did not see the price at which intended to sell himself. Neither did she be-ve in the reality of the first marriage; it was o improbable that her brother would have com-itted himself so far as to venture upon a second.

"I have no doubt that her persuasion is perfectly ell founded," she answered contemptuously, "and at it *was* illegal."

"I beg your pardon," returned Lewis; "it was regular, not illegal."

"You must excuse my remaining somewhat incredulous on that head," replied she; "but allowing for a moment that what you allege were true, why, since you think it necessary to make this circumstance known to us now, did you not perceive the same necessity before?"

"I have had a long struggle with myself on the subject, I assure you, Lady Georgina. During my cousin's lifetime, many and many a time, I expostulated with him on the cruel predicament in which he had placed your Ladyship and the child born of your marriage. Would to God I could have prevented that marriage! But it took place in France, and the news did not reach me in Eng-

ın the heart already bruised and broken? I
to afford time for the unstrung nerves to
ıemselves, and the bleeding wounds to heal."
ıy I ask if you are in communication with
Crawfurd?"
tainly not—as yet," answered Watson, with
n significance.
d you suppose her ignorant of the rights
she possesses?"
m satisfied that she is."
d do you or do you not consider it your
inform her of them?"
'a dépend!" answered Watson, gently raising
ulders and modestly dropping his eyes.
it may be advisable to do under such very
circumstances, must depend very much on
ircumstances—on the view your Ladyship
the situation—and—"
short, on the sum we pay you to be silent,"
answer that hovered on Mrs. Langham's
ut although she believed firmly that the
hing was a scheme to obtain money, and
e romance of the marriage was woven out
written promise given to Agnes by her
in the heyday of his infatuation, still she

did not wish to break with her visitor till she had obtained further information.

"The view I take must depend first on my conviction," she answered. "You cannot expect me to believe such an extraordinary a sertion as this, simply on your word. To be candid, I do not believe it. Where's your proof?"

"The marriage took place in the presence of witnesses; the clergyman who read the service is still alive."

"And pray who was he? What is his name?"

"That I am not yet at liberty to tell," he answered.

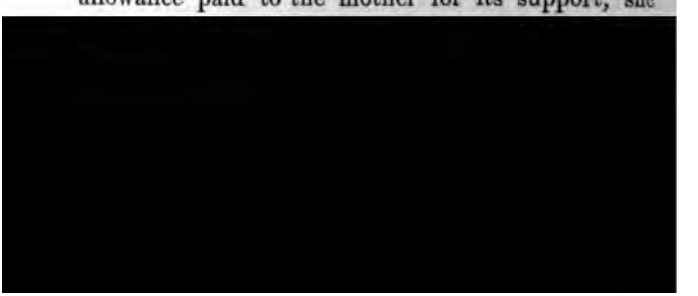
There was a certain tone of defiance graduall

It appears to me," resumed Louisa, "that till can bring me the most satisfactory proof of the ı of what you say, all further discussion of the ect is idle. You cannot expect me to believe an unaccountable story upon your simple l. Whenever you can produce such proof, I be ready to examine it. Meantime, I must you good morning. By the by, if you write, the goodness to enclose your letter to my r, Mrs. Langham, as it might otherwise fall my mother's hands and disturb her."

r. Watson was nonplussed: as soon as he had beyond the park gates, he stopped the driver, bade him let him out. He wanted to walk; motion of the carriage disturbed his thoughts, irritated his temper. He had not expected to net with so much incredulity, or to encounter a clear-headed, straightforward antagonist. notion of Lady Georgina was quite different. had reckoned on creating a terrible sensation— zement, alarm, a fit of hysterics, or a swoon, in :h, forbearing to summon aid, he would have otely hinted, as he bent over her, and held the ı to her nose, that all was not yet lost, and that ight be possible to come to an arrangement that ıld smoothe away those distressing difficulties;

but Louisa Langham was a very different kind person: and in falling foul of her, he had, what commonly called, "caught a Tartar!"

At the same time, although she betrayed alarm, and had dismissed her visitor with the dignity and calmness of unshaken security, was not so much at ease as she appeared. trembled at the bare possibility of such a s being true—the infamy that would fall upon brother's memory, and the calamity that wo overwhelm his widow and his child. She had thought Lionel unprincipled, but she had se enough of the world to know that the code honour which keeps men from injuring each oth does not extend to their dealings with wome especially to women of an inferior class. That had once been more or less fond of Agnes, s knew—the trial having disclosed the secret of the intimacy—and that there had been a child, and an allowance paid to the mother for its support, she



s, whether Agnes was deceived or deceiving. He ısted that the marriage had been a mock one; d, in any case, he thought the less said about it e better.

It was true, however, that those amongst them ho knew Agnes best, had been the most surprised ıat the proud, reserved, modest girl should have ırned out so ill. Since that period, the name of eir former favourite was never referred to, till ıdy Georgina's account of Isabel's unpardonable *capade* revived the painful subject; whilst, from otives of respect and delicacy for Lady Georgina's elings, as well as her brother's memory, except to iss Dacres, Isabel had forborne to repeat the tale Agnes's wrongs. But Louisa knew that her ter defended and upheld her, in a manner that d appeared to the family as disgraceful as it was accountable. Could Agnes have told her of this ret marriage?

Too active minded and energetic to rest quiescent der all these doubts and uncertainties, Mrs. ngham, who was really on the point of leaving dlands, resolved to go through London, and pay visit to Mr. Conyers; and in a few days, hearing more from Mr. Watson, she started.

Agnes's demeanour whilst she was receiving the

stipend, her haste to relinquish it as soon as she could maintain her child herself, and her despair when this only object of her affection was taken from her, had inspired the worldly-minded lawyer with a favourable opinion; and he had gradually arrived at the conclusion, that she was a virtuous girl, more sinned against than sinning. But he spoke diffidently of this humble merit to the Honourable Mrs. Langham.

"I am inclined to think there was nothing very bad about the girl," he said. "She lived quietly, supporting herself and her child by her needle, I fancy, till she lost him."

"The boy's dead, is he?" said Louisa, much

scrupulous as they should be in these cases. They have recourse to deceptions, that cannot be justified."

"Have you any reason to believe that Lionel was guilty of anything of the sort?"

"Why, there's no saying. I never saw Mr. Grosvenor himself after that affair at Ravenscliffe; but the girl certainly hinted at something of the sort!"

"A fictitious marriage you mean, perhaps?"

"Exactly."

"But she could scarcely have been deceived, Mr. Conyers," returned Mrs. Langham; "she that had been brought up on the estate, and must have known the impossibility of such an alliance."

"One would say so; but, I must say, she appeared very much surprised when I undeceived her."

"Then you did undeceive her?"

"Of course, I told her she must be mistaken, and that I presumed the whole thing was a jest."

"And what did she say to that?"

"Why, I scarcely recollect; I don't think she said much. My impression was, that she took it more quietly than I should have expected. On the whole, she seemed to me a discreet, well-behaved

young woman; and I was really sorry when she lost her little boy."

"I think I should like to see her," said Louisa. "No doubt she *has* been injured. Do you know where she is to be found?"

"I know where she formerly lived," he answered; "but I have not heard anything of her this long time."

It was remarkable that a sense of the injury done to Agnes, should not have been awakened till it was aroused by fear. How common such instances are! We must be touched ourselves, before we can feel for others. They had forgotten the disadvantage at which she had been placed, in a struggle betwixt

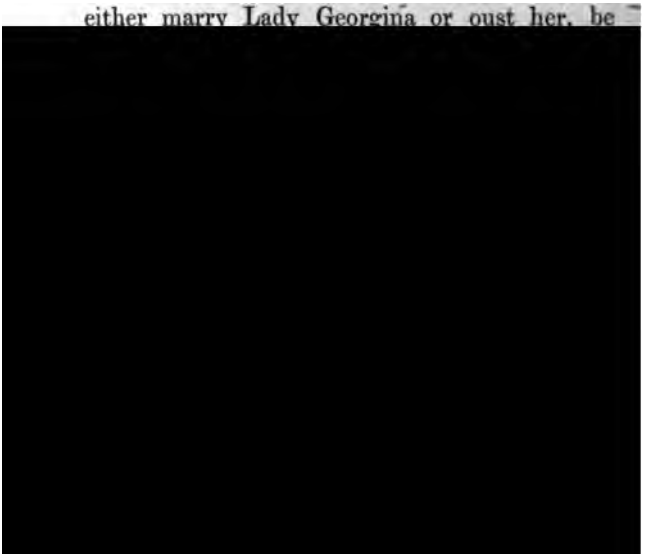
w, and she resolved to pay her a visit, moved rtly by this late sense of justice, and partly by re home interests; for she saw that Mr. Conyers d not spoken quite without reserve regarding the ception practised on Agnes; and her own mind s far from easy on the subject of this secret rriage.

Before, however, she could put her plan in execu-n, she was summoned to Ravenscliffe by the ess of her father. On this occasion, all the nily assembled; and even Isabel, the disowned, s permitted to stand by the old man's death-d.

Shortly after he was laid in the grave, Lady rosvenor retired to another residence, that had en settled on her as part of her jointure, whilst ady Georgina and her son (now Sir Francis Gros-enor) took up their residence at the Castle. Isabel ccompanied her mother, and the rest of the family ispersed to their several homes.

CHAPTER XV.

Mr. Lewis Watson's situation was now critic and called for an immediate decision. He m- either marry Lady Georgina or oust her, be



sent led him to prefer an alliance with Lady Georgina, which would secure him a handsome provision for life, safe from all contingencies, what he might choose to do hereafter remaining on the cards. His marrying the mother did not invalidate his right to supersede the son whenever he might find it advisable to do so.

But the difficulty was, to prove the first marriage without the aid of Agnes and her witnesses. If he but had that certificate, which he had risked so much to obtain, its evidence might have been accepted; but he had not—in the confusion and hurry of his flight on that momentous night, he had most strangely lost it; and amongst the fears that had for some time haunted him, had been the apprehension of its being found by somebody that would understand its importance. However, that anxiety had subsided with time; a perishable scrap of paper, it had probably fallen in the mud and been long ago dissolved into its primitive elements; but the difficulty of proving the legality of the marriage to one party without betraying it to the other, still remained.

Under these circumstances, Sir Francis being now dead and his grandfather, unknown to himself, the legitimate possessor of Ravenscliffe, Mr. Wat-

son finally resolved to inform his mother and the old gentleman of the real state of the case.

"I declare, here's Lewis returned!" exclaimed Mrs. Watson. "Good gracious! what can have brought him back so soon?"

"His own balloon, I dare say," answered the Colonel, sarcastically.

"I shouldn't wonder if something has happened at Ravenscliffe. I dreamt last night that you and I were driving up to the Castle in a carriage-and-four, and that just as we reached the terrace, we saw two men bringing out a child's coffin."

"I dare say you did; fortunately your dreams are not prophetic."

"Then why did you bring him up with expectations, poor fellow, as you call him? Expectations that are never likely to be realized. He had better have been a shoemaker than a poor gentleman living on expectations."

This proposition being unanswerable, Mrs. Watson considered it a proper occasion for tears, and being the kind of woman that enjoys the privilege of having them always at command, her eyes filled, and she was in the act of blowing her nose when her son entered the room.

"Good morning, Sir. How are you, Ma'am?"

"Good morning," answered the Colonel, dryly; for he had had a strong persuasion that he should not see his grandson's face again as long as the hundred pounds lasted; and this speedy return augured a more rapid dispersion of the fund than even his fears had augured.

Mrs. Watson being at that moment in the proud attitude of an injured woman, held out her right hand silently, whilst with the left she wiped a tear from the corner of her eye.

"What's the matter, Ma'am?" said Lewis. "I hope there's nothing wrong?"

"Oh, no, nothing," answered his mother, in a resigned tone.

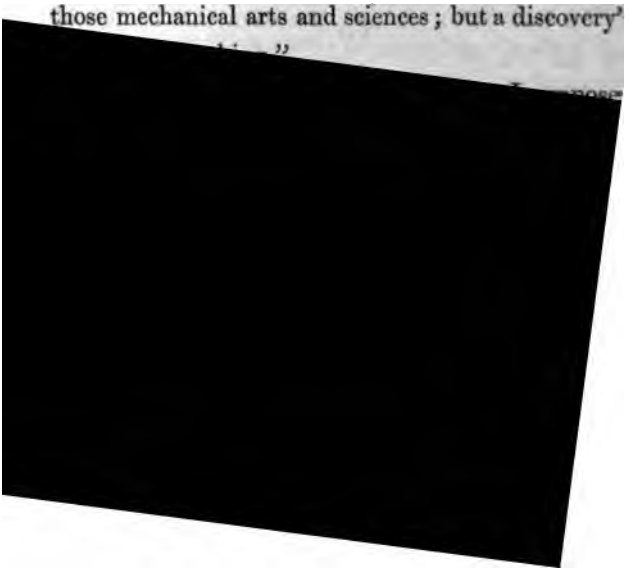
"Well, Sir, where's this grand invention of yours, that's to make your fortune?"

"Invention, Sir? I never claimed to have made any invention, that I know of."

"If you didn't, your mother did for you."

"My mother's too sanguine, Sir, and too partial a great deal, as you know. I can boast of no invention; but I have made a discovery, that I flatter myself will have no little effect upon your fortunes, whatever it may have on my own."

"I knew it," said Mrs. Watson, with a little scornful laugh directed against the Colonel. "I called it an invention, because I don't understand those mechanical arts and sciences; but a discovery"



ıe money from their pockets by exactly the same ind of eloquence. "No, Sir; the discovery I ave made, if, indeed, discovery it can be called, ›r I have been acquainted with the facts a long hile, although I have forborne to make them ublic, from a weak sentiment of pity for those who ave shown little pity to me—"

"What facts are you talking of?" inquired the Colonel.

"What would you say, Sir, if I were to tell you hat the so-called heir of Ravenscliffe, Lady Georgina's son, is a bastard?"

"Why, Sir, I should say you lied!" returned the Colonel.

"I cannot wonder at it, Sir; and yet you would be mistaken," returned Lewis.

"I was certain there was something more than common in my dream last night," said Mrs. Watson, shrewdly.

"It must appear, on the first view, an absurd assertion," continued the young man; "yet there is nothing more certain than that the present Sir Francis is an illegitimate child."

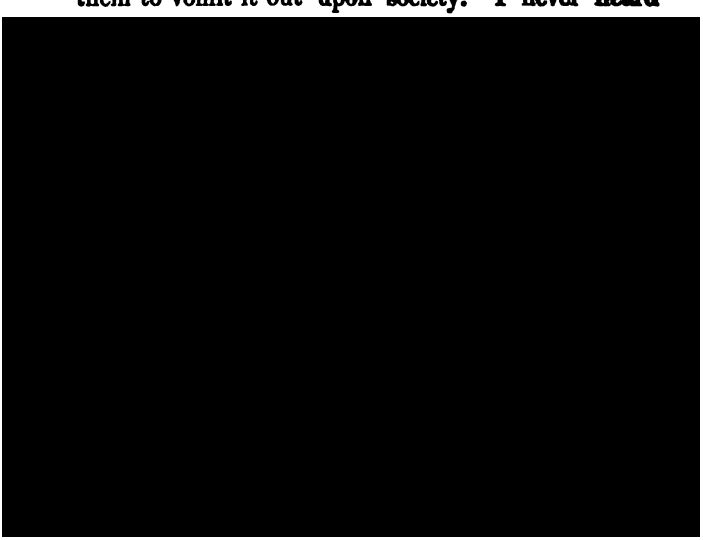
"I am not at all surprised," observed Mrs. Watson, with an air of cool conviction; "I always had my doubts that Lady Georgina was no better than she should be, as her mother was before her."



"I wonder you are not ashamed to sit there and utter such unfounded calumnies, Letitia," exclaimed the Colonel. "What do you know of Lady Georgina Grosvenor, or of her mother either, to justify such imputations?"

"I know what I know. *I* remember well when Lord Minevar died—I don't mean the young Lord, but the old Lord—how she, the widow, I mean, was talked of with Sir Benjamin Halkett. It was in everybody's mouth."

"Scandal generally is in everybody's mouth—women's mouths, at least. It's a pity one can't cram it down their own throats, instead of allowing them to vomit it out upon society. I never heard



had been hitherto unconsciously holding, and began to clap her hands with a childish expression of triumph.

"A wife in England!" exclaimed the Colonel.

"A wife in England, Sir. You will remember something about a girl called Agnes Crawfurd, who came forward on that trial of the valet; she had lived in the family as lady's-maid, I fancy. Well, Sir, before ever he left England, Lionel was married to that woman. She was very handsome, and he'd had a fancy for her from boyhood."

"I can't believe it," exclaimed the Colonel.

"I can," said Mrs. Watson.

"Married to Agnes Crawfurd! Her father held a farm on the estate; Daniel Crawfurd—I remember him very well; a very decent fellow."

"Exactly, Sir; and his daughter Agnes is at this moment the real Lady Grosvenor, as certainly as my name's Watson."

"And I hope there's no doubt of that!" said his mother, with a toss of the head that spoke volumes of virtue.

"And pray what's your authority for this extraordinary story? Is it the girl herself?"

"By no means, Sir. She is not even aware of the circumstance."

"Married, and not aware of it herself!"

"I dare say she was married by special license," said Mrs. Watson, who had a vague idea that in such cases the ordinary ceremony was dispensed with.

"I mean she is not aware that her marriage is legal," continued Watson, "which nevertheless it assuredly is."

"Where was she married? Who married her?"

"She was married in the chapel at Ravenscliffe, in the presence of witnesses, two of whom are now alive, and I believe all three are. The ceremony was performed by my brother Gerald, shortly after he had taken orders."

"Young scoundrel!" exclaimed the old man,

to treat me as a friend and a relation, the result might have been very different; I might have saved them from ruin, now inevitable."

The Colonel paused for a moment's reflection. Was it inevitable?

"Are these circumstances known at Ravenscliffe?"

"They are, Sir; at least, by Lady Georgina. Whether she has communicated them to the rest of the family, I cannot say; but she met the information with a degree of haughty incredulity, that shut the door at once to anything like negotiation."

"Negotiation!" echoed the Colonel; "what do you mean by negotiation?"

"Merely, Sir, that actuated by the best feelings, I wished to ascertain if some middle term could not be found to avoid publicity, and avert the calamity that threatens the family. For this purpose, I procured an interview with Lady Georgina."

"And she rejected your overtures?"

"She did, Sir," answered Watson, who, having adopted this course, had abandoned all idea of temporising. "*Aut Cæsar aut nullus*" was his present device.

"And I admire her for it," said the Colonel: "I admire her for it very much. She had no right

to be a party to any such transaction. Pray, is there any family by this first marriage?"

"A son, Sir," answered the young man; and there he stopped, feeling an intimate conviction, that if he added that the child was not forthcoming, he should lay himself open to some unpleasant suspicions, on the part of his grandfather. His consciousness of what he had contemplated doing, when somebody else so strangely spared him the trouble, kept him silent. He was not obliged to know more than he had told; the rest would be disclosed in the due course of events.

When the young man went to bed that night, to build castles in the air; for the ice, now broken, he saw nothing to intervene betwixt him and fortune

tending emotions; recoiling, on the one hand, from being party to an injustice; and, on the other, from bringing disgrace on the name in which he prided himself; and yet these were the only alternatives that presented themselves. He must allow Agnes and her son to be not only defrauded of their rights, but to pine under a cruel weight of unmerited ignominy; or Lionel's reputation, and Lady Georgina's happiness and her son's prospects, must be sacrificed.

Of the effect of either line of conduct on his own fortunes, he did not pause to think; and almost as little did he think of his grandson's. Certainly he had no right to be in any way instrumental in cutting the young man off from his inheritance; but, in the first place, as there was a son by either marriage, it did not make much difference to that individual which of them interposed to keep him out of the property; and, in the next, he had so little confidence in Lewis's conduct, and so little satisfaction in leaving a family representative of the name of Watson, that he was not disposed to take a step out of the way to promote his succession. But, setting all consideration for himself and his own branch of the family out of the question, he could not remain inactive, with such a secret as this weighing on his conscience. Moreover, had he even been

disposed to do so, it was no longer possible. I
was already in the hands of those who would not le
it rest. Watson had doubtless his own motives fo
stirring in the affair; and as for his mother, sh
would talk, if she died for it.

She, too, was restless and wakeful, slumbering t
dream of little coffins; and waking, to triumph i
the anticipated downfal of Lady Georgina and h
son, who had so long been the objects of her en
and hatred.

CHAPTER XVI.

As Lady Georgina and Colonel Grosvenor had never met since she was a child, she was somewhat surprised, therefore, to receive a letter from him, announcing an early visit; intimating, at the same time, that the importance of the subject on which it was necessary they should confer—a subject better avoided in a letter—must plead his excuse for troubling her.

"Something about that Mr. Watson again, I suppose; I wish Louisa was here to receive him;" for, unwilling to alarm her, Mrs. Langham had contented herself with referring the young man's visit to some wild scheme for getting money. Her Ladyship was therefore prepared with a cool reception for her guest; but Colonel Grosvenor was a tall, grey-haired, dignified-looking old man, who, possessed

with the serious nature of the errand on which he had come, entered the room, and saluted her with such a kind, grave, almost sad expression of countenance, and at the same time with such an air of high-breeding and refinement, that her haughtiness and suspicion gave way, and the better part of her nature took the ascendant.

Of infirm constitution, and educated by a weak mother into the most erroneous notions of her own importance, Lady Georgina was incessantly nursing and coddling herself, her mind for ever occupied with her own morbid sensations, to the exclusion of almost every other subject, except the welfare of her son—welfare, that is, after her manner of thinking

his hand, and attempted to give her a hearty shake; but the irresponsive fingers disappointed him. Lady Georgina did not intend to be cool, but she could not shake hands.

"I hope I see you well," said the old man. "How is the little fellow?"

This was the key-note to a fertile theme, and Lady Georgina entered into a vast number of details regarding her son's state of health, which not only wearied the Colonel, but somewhat surprised him, considering the momentous nature of the business that occasioned his visit. She spoke of the child, too, always as Sir Francis.

"Perhaps you would like to see him?" she said, raising her hand to the bell.

"Very much," he answered; "but let that be by-and-by. My mind will be more disengaged, after we have conferred a little about this distressing business."

"What distressing business?" asked Lady Georgina.

"She does not believe the story of the first marriage," thought he, "or she could not appear so indifferent.

"I allude to the business that took my grandson to Redlands lately. At that time, I knew

nothing of the affair; if I had, I should not have permitted him to be the bearer of such unpleasant intelligence. It was very improper conduct on his part, and so I have told him."

"I was very much surprised at his visit," answered Lady Georgina, not knowing very well what to say.

"I don't wonder at it, officious young blackguard!" said the Colonel. "But, tell me, my dear Lady, had you ever any reason to suspect that Lionel had entered into any unfortunate engagement?"

"No," answered her Ladyship, "never!" concluding the engagement alluded to was of a pecu-

of a few thousand pounds, perhaps; a thing doubtless to be regretted, but not worth disturbing herself about. "Afraid of what?"

"That there is some truth in this story of my grandson's regarding that girl, Agnes Crawfurd."

"I believe she's a very good-for-nothing person indeed!" responded Lady Georgina, with considerable bitterness; "and I always thought it exceedingly wrong and injudicious of Lady Grosvenor to encourage her about the Castle, and permit such a person to associate with her daughters."

"You have reason to entertain an ill opinion of the girl, then, have you?"

"Certainly. I believe both Mrs. Langham and Mrs. Damer were quite *désabusées* about her long ago. And that affair of Isabel's, you know, living with such a person as that, for several weeks together, in an obscure street of Paris, was really too shocking!"

"Did my niece, Isabel Grosvenor, do that?"

"Assuredly she did; I never was so shocked or distressed in my life, as when I discovered where she had been."

"Most extraordinary!" said the Colonel, altogether bewildered. "I suspect Bel must be, somehow or other, acquainted with the circumstances of

the secret marriage; nothing else could account for her doing such a thing."

"What secret marriage?"

"Lionel's."

"Lionel's a secret marriage! What are you talking of?"

"I thought my grandson had explained—"

"Explained what?"

"I beg your pardon—I feel very much distressed—I thought you were acquainted with the circumstances of an unfortunate engagement entered into by my nephew previous to his marriage."

Here Lady Georgina half rose from her recumbent attitude on the sofa, and supporting herself by

It appears to have been solemnized at Ravens-
, here, in the chapel," continued the Colonel,
, having stepped in so far, was eager to get
ugh his painful task; "and there was a child—
y, born within the year."

ady Georgina's cheeks and lips were of an
paleness; she looked as if she were going to
t, and she had often fainted upon a hundredth
of the provocation: she did not faint now,
ever, but she spoke with difficulty.

'Will you have the goodness to explain to me
precise effect of—of such a marriage—if true—
my—my son and myself?"

'Of course, a second marriage cannot be valid
lst the first wife lives, nor the offspring of it
timate," answered the Colonel, with a quivering

He too was deathly pale, and the withered
d shook with emotion, as he laid it upon hers;
ut the sin and the shame will fall where it is
—not on you, or on your child. You are
neless, and you will be the objects of universal
ipathy and respect."

ady Georgina clapped the palm of her hand
ently on her forehead.

'Of sympathy!—pity!—scorn for the proud
nan in the dust! But they shall never see
' and so saying, she rushed out of the room,

whilst the Colonel rang the bell, and desired her maid might attend her.

When, anxious and alarmed, he some time afterwards sent to inquire for her, the message he received was, that her Ladyship had lain down, and was quite composed; and to his repeated inquiries during the evening, the same answer was returned. Not thinking it right to leave the house under present circumstances, the old gentleman desired that a bed might be prepared for him, to which he retired early, very much regretting his undertaking, since the line of conduct he would have pursued, had he supposed Lady Georgina ignorant of this terrible secret, would have been

night—the morning had dawned before he slept; and when he rang his bell, it was past ten o'clock. On descending, he found his breakfast prepared.

"Have you heard how Lady Georgina is this morning?" he inquired of the butler.

"I believe her Ladyship was pretty well, Sir."

"I should like to see Sir Francis if he is disengaged."

"Sir Francis and Dr. Falkner went away with my Lady, Sir."

"Is Lady Georgina gone out?"

"My Lady left early this morning for London, Sir."

"Her wounded pride will not allow her to meet me!" said the old man to himself. "Poor thing—poor thing! I must follow her to town, and see if Conyers cannot help us."

He started for London that afternoon, but on calling at Lady Georgina's house in Grosvenor Square, he was informed that her Ladyship had only remained there a couple of hours, and had then proceeded, with all speed, to Dover.

CHAPTER XVII.

One of Leighton's first objects, on his return to England, had been to find out Agnes; and his occasional visits at her lodging on a Sunday evening, had brought him acquainted with Hewson and his

lays of prosperity, when the newspapers descended rom the library to the steward's room. Hewson ook in the "Times" for the benefit of such of his ustomers as had a political turn of mind; and it vas a great pleasure to Leighton to get a spell at he broad sheet occasionally, although, for his own eading, he would have preferred the "Morning Post," where the movements of the fashionable vorld were recorded, in which he, as a humble nit, had been formerly involved. These notices, when he happened to see them, brought back the avour of better days. They recalled to him the oilets he had superintended, the festivities he had witnessed, the roads he had travelled with four iorses, to draw him, and a pretty lady's maid, with a pink parasol, beside him, in the rumble; together with the *petit souper* of delicate remainders in the iousekeeper's room, and all the luxuries of the econd table awaiting him at the end of the journey. Ladies' maids and valets are not poetical; if they were, we should certainly, ere this, have had a *recueil* of verses, singing the lamentable fall of John Snipes, or Jemima Higgins; for what can be more romantic, what more edifying, than the sudden reverses of fortune to which these unconscious heroes and heroines are subject? To-day, in the

full enjoyment of ten, twenty, thirty thousand a-year—to-morrow, in a garret, living on tripe!

Leighton did not see the poetry of the thing; but he felt the bitterness of it very often. Like the discrowned Legitimists, the idea of a *Restoration* was never absent from his mind; and as the only possibility of this desideratum seemed somehow or other linked with the fortunes of Mr. Lewis Watson, that gentleman formed also a frequent subject of his cogitations. He wondered where he resided, and how he lived; but since quitting Paris, he had neither seen nor heard of him, nor did he know anybody likely to give him the information he desired.

"A pointer puppy and a portmanteau;" exactly the two articles which had accompanied Watson when he quitted Ravenscliffe Castle. He remembered the circumstances distinctly. The two young men were at breakfast, and he was attending them. They were talking of sporting dogs; and Lionel desired Leighton to bring in Juno's puppies; which he did, placing the three little things (then about six weeks old) on the floor. The gentlemen played with them for some time, and Lionel asked Watson if he would like to have one. He hesitated at first, saying he did not know how to get it to his grandfather's. If once it was there, his mother would look to it, and it would do very well. Mr. Grosvenor said:

"Carry it in a basket; it's so young, that it will travel quite safely, and it will want nothing but a little milk on the road."

They then bade Leighton give the animal some milk in a saucer, to try if it could lap, which it did. Nothing more was said on the subject, till the morning Mr. Watson was about to leave; and then, whilst at breakfast, Mr. Grosvenor had desired Leighton to have the puppy put in a basket with some straw, and see it placed in the dog-cart. This he had done; and had also strapped the portmanteau, and brought it to the carriage himself.

He was so impressed with the coincidence, on reading the advertisement, that he struck the table with his fist, and involuntarily exclaimed:

"By G—d, I think I've got him now!"

"What's the matter? Who do you think you've got?" inquired Hewson.

"A scoundrel, who has been my ruin!" answered Leighton. "I wasn't always as badly off as you see me. I've lived in some of the first families in England, and should be still, but for a d——d rascal. But if I'm not much mistaken, I'm upon his track now; and, poor as I am, I'll find the way to hunt him up, or my name's not Leighton."

and jumping out of bed, he was disturbed, and made off without them."

"And should you know the dog and portmanteau again?"

"Should I? To be sure I should. The dog was all white except his ears, which were liver-coloured, and he'd a liver-coloured spot just at the root of his tail; and then, besides knowing the portmanteau, I should know the mark on the linen. I could swear to them both, any day."

There was no denying that the circumstances were very suspicious; but Hewson reasonably objected, that although the dog and portmanteau turned out to be the articles in question, he did not see how that could prove the owner of them guilty of the assault; and the remark was just enough, since the instinctive conviction of Watson's guilt, to which close observation had brought Leighton, could not be transferred to another. Hewson said, he did not see how he could go about to accuse a gentleman, like that, of such a crime, and that he did not think anybody would listen to him. But strong conviction supported Leighton in his project, urged on, as he was, by the desire to recover his own position, and by his unsatisfied thirst for vengeance. No, he would not be discouraged by diffi-

ies. It was not easy for a poor man to get a
uring—that he knew too well; but he would not
linquish his object; and the passion that impelled
im inspired him with confidence of success.

He had one friend now who, he knew, would be
eady to listen to his tale, and help him with her
advice; and that was Patton's wife, to whom he
next proceeded, having bought a copy of the paper
containing the advertisement, as he went along.
Mrs. Patton was a bold, shrewd woman; and as she
fully shared Leighton's conviction, she entered ener-
getically into his interests.

"Depend on it," she said, "if you don't make
haste, he'll (meaning Watson) get hold of the
things himself—for it's most like he frequents
coffee-houses and places where he'll see the news-
papers;—and when once he's got 'em, you're done
for. You should be off by this night's coach
yourself."

But to this plan Leighton objected that he had
enough to undertake the journey, and
off in that manner, he
hand had

lives still at Tower Hill, to go over for me to the 'Red Lion' Inn, at C——, and inquire about the things."

"What good will that do?" asked Mrs. Patton.

"Why, I might hear what kind of dog and portmanteau it was, and what sort of looking gentleman left them there; and then, if they're the same, I think I'd go to a lawyer about it."

"What's the use of going to a lawyer when you haven't no money to pay him his fees? Lawyers 'll do nothing without money, more than other folks."

The *no money*, was a stop in every direction. However, it was agreed as the only expedient that presented itself for the moment, to write to this Jem Walker on the subject. Leighton might have done it in his own name, for he had known him formerly, with such slight acquaintance as gentlemen's gentlemen acknowledge the *valetaille;* but it was not impossible but that Jem, in the pride of unimpeached virtue, might decline a correspondence with the fallen valet. Leighton therefore, as the better scribe, wrote the letter with Mrs. Patton's authority in her husband's name; giving no reason for the inquiry but requesting an early answer with full and particular descriptions of the dog and portmanteau, and also of their owner.

His master being absent, and Jem having little or nothing to do but to exercise a couple of hunters, the commission was not unwelcome, and as he rode up to the door of the inn, he saw a remarkably fine pointer dog lying stretched out on the door-step with his nose on the ground between his two fore-paws. The sound of the horse's foot brought the ostler to the door.

"That's a fine dog o' yourn!" said Jem, by way of opening his mission.

"Ay! he is," returned the ostler, patting the animal. "Shall I lead your horse round to the stable?"

"I'll do that myself," said Jem. "Who does

Steady too, as old time! Never runs in upon the game. And he arn't jealous, as some dogs be; he'll back another half across a field!"

"How old is he?"

"I never heerd say; but master had him afore I came here. I think he got him quite a puppy from some gentleman as stopped at the house."

Having ascertained that this was all the ostler knew, Jem next presented himself to the hostess. What was the object of the inquiries he was directed to make he did not know; but he suspected there was some act of robbery or swindling connected with the property so long unclaimed and so recently advertised, and he therefore thought it advisable to be very cautious and discreet. Besides Jem prided himself on being "a knowing chap, and up to a thing or two," and it flattered his self-love to get all the information he wanted without giving any in return. So, after saluting Mrs. Clark, he inquired about the dog he had seen at the door, which from the hints gathered from the ostler, he concluded to be the animal alluded to in the advertisement.

"He was a fine-looking dog," he said, "and he knew a gentleman that wanted a pointer; and if the dog was well broke, wouldn't mind giving a pretty long price for him."

The widow laughed. "Poor Rollo!" she cried, whereupon, the dog hearing his name, came in and rubbed his sides against her knee. "Poor Rollo! It's a strange thing, but I think everybody as goes past the house and sees Rollo lying at the door takes a fancy to him. He's as good as a sign-board, Rollo is; I'm sure he's brought us many a customer! Why 'twas but last week a gentleman offered me ten pounds for him; and Rollo's no chicken either now; be you, old dog?"

"Then you won't sell him?"

"I don't say that, neither," returned Mrs. Clark, "if so be he were mine to sell; not but I should be sorry to part with Rollo, too, poor fellow! But as folks say, what's the use of a sporting dog to me? It's a sin and a shame, says they, to keep a dog like that basking in the sun all day, a doing of nothing; and so it is! Lor love you! My old man war as fond of Rollo as if he'd been a child; and it's my opinion, the dog's never been the same since poor Clark died."

"A dog what's used to work 's oft-times as fond of sport as his master is. Come! You'd better part with him. Name your price, and I think I can get you a customer."

"Nay," said Mrs. Clark; "he's promised already to a gentleman as was here last week; that

is, if I sell him; but to say the truth, the dog bean't mine to sell."

"Not your'n! I thought he war your husband's. I'm sure I've seen Clark shooting to him."

"Ay, no doubt, you may; for the truth is, the dog's our'n, and he is'nt our'n. We've had him ever sin he war a pup, and my husband shot the first bird Rollo ever saw; and I've heard him say, he stood as steady as if the best keeper in England had broke him."

"But whose is he, if he bean't your'n?"

"Well, you see, it's near on for six years agone now—it was in the month o' December, the 14th. I mind it as if it was but yesterday, and I remember the day of the month, because it happened to be poor Clark's birthday, and we'd a friend or two in to drink a glass of punch at supper time. Well, I suppose it might be about six o'clock in the evening, a gig stopped at the door, and a gentleman alighted from it. Clark heard the wheels, and called Bill, the ostler as we had then, to take the horse; but the man as drove, said, he'd just give him a little hay and water, and bade Bill not take him out o' the shafts. The gentleman hadn't no luggage incept a small portmanteau, and a round basket, which Clark carried into this here very parlour we're a sitting in. Howsomever, he



often thought, Clark and I, 't
Howsomever, 'twas a hearty one
witness to! Lauk a mercy, I
never axed you if you wouldn'
something! Don't say no!".

Jem Walker had no intention
no; on the contrary, he said
will in the world; and the hos
him a stiff tumbler of brandy-an
her story at his request.

"Well; when the gentleman
he poured some milk into a sauc
Clark, who had gone in to see
wanting, says he, 'Just untie th
you?' says he; 'I've got a you
I'll give him a little of this milk
husband unties the basket, and t
was a puppy not much bigger th

"Well, Sir, when the dog had lapped up the milk, the gentleman bade my husband put him in the basket, and tie it up again, for says he, 'I'm a going out for a bit; but I shall be back time enough to catch the Lunnun coach,' says he, 'as it passes your door.'

"'That'll be 'twixt eleven and twelve o'clock,' says Clark.

"'Well,' says he, 'I shall be back afore that;' and away he walked with his stick in his hand—I think I see him now."

"What sort o' chap was he?" asked Jem.

"Well, he'd ha' made two o' you. He was a well grown man; and might be six or seven and twenty years old; and he'd got on a brown great coat; and when he went away, he tied a handkerchief, a blue and white check it was, about his throat."

"And what came on him arter?"

"The Lord knows! When he was gone Clark brought the basket into the bar, and untied it to show me the dog—I was always fond o' them creturs; and I and Mrs. Blake as kept the grocery opposite—she and her husband had dropped in to take a glass o' something, 'cause it was my old man's birthday; she and I fondled the dog, and it

played about the floor with a cork we gived it, till we thought the gentleman would be coming in; and then my husband put it into the basket, and carried it back to the parlour, and there it whined and cried—it wanted to be back with us, and have the cork again, didn't you, Rollo?" Rollo wagged assent.

"Well, Sir, when the church struck a quarter past eleven, Clark says, says he, 'If that 'ere gentleman arn't soon back, he'll miss the coach!' and presently he got up, and went to the door to look if he could see him a-coming. 'I don't see nothing on him,' says he, coming back presently, 'and in ten minutes the coach 'll be here!'

many a gentleman 'll be worse off this night than sleeping at the 'Red Lion,' and with that I went in and put a pair of sheets to the fire.

"Well, Sir, to make short of a long story, the gentleman didn't come. I made up the bed in No. 6, and put water in the jug, and hung a couple of clean towels on the horse, but deuce a bit we saw on him. Clark and I sat up till near one o'clock, and then we went to bed.

"'He's just a going to stay where he is, all night,' says Clark, 'and no doubt he'll be back in the morning.'

"Howsever, our Sal—that's my little girl—she's at school now;—she goes to Miss Crumpton's school, in East Street, perhaps, you'll know Miss Crumpton?—she comes up to my bedroom when I was a-putting on my clothes in the morning, and says she, 'Mother,' says she, 'there's something alive, a-whining and crying down below, in a basket; what is it?'

"'Bless me,' says I, 'it'll be the gentleman's little dog; we must give it a sup of milk, or the poor thing 'll starve!' So I hurries on my clothes, and down I went and guv it some milk, and thankful it war! Warn't you, Rollo?" Rollo, as usual, whenever he was appealed to, gave a corroborative wag.

"Well, Sir, the day went on, and no gentleman; and two o'clock struck, and no gentleman; and then Clark says, says he, 'I'm afeard something has happened to him.'

"'Lauk a mercy,' says I, 'what could happen to him?'

"'He may have tumbled into the water,' says Clark.

"Well, Sir, we was a-standing at the door when he said this, and who should we see just then a-coming towards us, but a lad as had lived ostler with us, and he'd been a-living since at the 'Eagle,' at Ellerton; but he and Mr. Simmons had had words, and he was a-going to look for a place down the country. So he comed up to *my* husband, and says he, 'Have you heard what's happened at the Castle?' says he.

"'No,' says I. 'Has anything happened at Laughton?' for that's the nearest to us; and we never had nothing to do with the Ravenscliffe folks, so that I didn't think on 'em.

"'No,' says he, 'it's Ravenscliffe, I mean;' and then he up and told us how the Castle had been attacked by robbers in the night, and that Mr. Grosvenor was killed; he warn't, you know, but that's what we heerd at first; and how the Ellerton doctor had been fetched, and how an express had

been sent up to Lunnun to bring down Sir Francis and my Lady.

"Well, Sir, we was so taken aback at this, that it was some time afore we could think of anything else whatsoever; but at last, when evening came, and no gentleman, I says to my husband, says I, 'Lauk, Clark; I hope the gentleman didn't fall in with them 'ere robbers.'

"'I hope not,' says Clark; 'but that's just what I was a-thinking on; and if he don't come back, I've a mind to go to Slater, the constable, and tell him about it;' and I believe he would, if it hadn't been found out that it wasn't robbers; but Mr. Grosvenor's valet that had done it."

"And didn't the gentleman never come back?" inquired Jem Walker.

"Not he," answered Mrs. Clark. "We never see his face agen from that day to this; and it was always Clark's opinion, and mine too, that he'd tumbled into the river, in the dark, and got drowned."

"Well, maybe he war, and maybe he warn't," said Jem, who knew nothing about the matter, but had no objection to appear as if he did. "And now you want to sell the dog?"

"I don't say that neither," returned Mrs. Clark; "for I'm fond o' the animal, and my husband 'ud as soon ha' thought o' parting with his right hand



that ere advertisement. I s'pos
that's what brought you here?"

Jem nodded assent.

"It was a gentleman as offere
the dog only last week. He k
seen him out with my husband
him I didn't know as I'd any
'cause he'd been left here a pup
bid me advertise him in the
thought I'd do it just to see i
him, for I should like to know
gentleman that owned him."

"Well," says Jem, finishin
brandy-and-water, "if the dog's
is, and there's no more about it."

"There's his portmantle up
closet," continued Mrs. Clark;
yesterday as I was a-turning ou

was one as wouldn't lay a finger on no gentleman's property; more especial when it was locked, you know."

"But there might be something in it to show who he was," suggested Jem.

"That's true," said Mrs. Clark; "but we was always in hopes he'd come back."

An early post conveyed to Mrs. Patton the sum of the information thus collected.

"The dog and portmantle," said Jem, was left at the 'Red Lion' about six years agone by a gentleman in a brown great coat, about twenty-five yearn old, as comed in a gig. He war taller than I, which he mite easy be. He had eggs and ham for tea, and guv milk to the dog as lapt, and said he was a-going up to Lunnun by the coach. The dog was in a round basket, and when he went out he tied a check handkerchief about his neck, and said he'd be back for the up coach as passes at eleven—but he never comed. It was the same night as that ere business comed off at Ravenscliffe twixt Mr. Grosvenor and his valet as was. The dog answers to the name of Roller, and is an uncommon fine animal, liver and wight, and a gentleman offered ten guineas for him, which is a long price for a dog six years old—but it war Clark as broke him, and he war a capital shot, and his tail's as fine as

my lady's whip, and uncommon strong and clever. The portmantle's in the garret, but they han't never opened it."

These indications were too plain to be mistaken. Leighton felt quite satisfied that Mr. Watson was the missing traveller, and also Mr. Grosvenor's assailant; but now that he had obtained this information and convinced himself, what use was he to make of his knowledge? How convert it to his own advantage? Who could he address? Who would attend to anything he said? Even in this country, where something like justice and equal dealing is aimed at, it is astonishing how difficult it may be for a poor man to obtain a hearing of any one

CHAPTER XVIII.

One evening whilst she was at tea with her sister, Agnes was surprised by receiving a note from Mr. Conyers, requesting that she would call on him the following day at eleven o'clock. It was written in a respectful tone: "Mr. Conyers presenting his compliments to Mrs. Gibson, requesting her, if not inconvenient, &c., &c.," and the person who brought it waited an answer.

"What can it be about?" she said, the almost extinguished hope reviving for a moment.

"He must have heard something," said Martha, *something* meant about Willie, of course.

"I wish he could see me this evening," exclaimed the mother; "it's so long to wait. I wonder if I should find him if I went directly! But the lad who brought the note told her, that

Mr. Conyers always quitted the office at five o'clock; so she sent word that she would wait on him precisely at eleven.

Although the sisters sat up half the night, hoping, conjecturing and speculating on what the unusual summons might portend, Agnes was ready betimes, and thought ten o'clock would never strike. It came at last, and soon afterwards, with the certainty of being there before the hour appointed, she proceeded to the lawyer's. When the door was opened, she was politely informed he was engaged just then, but she was shown into a private room and requested to wait. It was a clerk that admitted her; a man she had often seen before when she

ment would have been accepted as no more than her due, but her dreams of Ladyhood were all gone by now, and she was very humble.

Her heart beat every time she heard a room door open or a foot in the hall; but another and another was let out, some by Mr. Conyers himself, for she recognized his voice—still he came not to her. She was in fact a great deal too early, and had nearly three-quarters of an hour to wait. She was getting quite sick with impatience, when she heard a carriage stop and a loud double knock. Immediately afterwards the same clerk opened the door of the room she was in, and ushered in a very dignified, aristocratic-looking old gentleman, who bowed to her, and as the door closed, said: "Miss Crawfurd, I believe?"

Agnes blushed and hesitated; she had been so long called Mrs. Gibson—even Mr. Conyers had called her so—that her first unconscious impulse was to deny her own name.

"I believe," continued the old gentleman, putting another construction on her hesitation, "I believe you have reason to think that you might justly have laid claim to another appellation."

"I am commonly called Mrs. Gibson, Sir," answered Agnes, not well comprehending his meaning.

"But your name is not Gibson, is it? You are Agnes Crawfurd, of the Holmes, are you not?"

Agnes blushed, and looked rather angry; she thought the question impertinent; but she answered:

"I was, Sir."

"Are you married, then?"

Another awkward question; but she answered, rather haughtily,

"No, Sir."

"I understand you adopted the name of Gibson?"

No answer.

Colonel Grosvenor—for of course it was he—felt a conviction that the story of the secret mar-



anybody but her own early friends, John and Martha. The only circumstance that enabled her to meet Mr. Conyers being, that he knew she had been deluded by a mock-marriage, mortifying as even that was. So now, interrogated by this stranger, well-bred though he was, the old leaven appeared again; the pale cheek flushed, and pride sat upon the still beautiful brow. That was not a woman to be led astray by a weak boy like Lionel.

"I am afraid you think me impertinent," said the Colonel, "but excuse me, my questions are connected with interests of great importance. You have a son, I think?"

"Oh!" cried Agnes, clasping her hands with energy, and at once breaking through the reserve of her demeanour, "tell me—tell me, where is he? —where is my child?"

"Is he not with you?" inquired the Colonel.

"Oh, no—no!—is he found? Is it about him that Mr. Conyers sent for me?"

"Certainly not," answered the Colonel. "Am I to understand that you have lost your child?"

Agnes burst into tears, the disappointment was so great.

"I thought it was to hear of my boy that I was sent for," she said, when she could speak.

"Compose yourself," said Colonel Grosvenor, in whose breast a new set of suspicions were beginning to burn; "pray be calm. It was I who requested this interview: and be assured I should not have done so without cogent reasons. I had no idea you had lost your child: when did you lose him, and how?"

Agnes told her story.

"And you have never had any suspicion? There is nobody you think likely to have taken him?—Nobody that had a motive for doing it?"

"Nobody, unless his father."

"But what motive do you suppose he could

[redacted]

tinent old gentleman, who had an air of such high birth and prosperity about him, that she thought he could succeed in anything he undertook.

"The boy you have lost was the son of—of Lionel Grosvenor, was he?"

"Yes, Sir."

"To whom you supposed you were married?"

"Yes."

Colonel Grosvenor then proceeded to ask her a variety of questions concerning the marriage, and all that had followed it; and amongst others he inquired whether she knew the name of the person who had performed the ceremony. Her confidence won by the promise to aid her efforts for the recovery of her child, she answered him without reserve.

"I did not know at the time, but I know now. I saw the gentleman at Deal. He was performing the service there, and I learnt his name was Watson. I knew him again directly."

"Then you were married by a clergyman?"

"I don't know whether he was a clergyman then; and I was never asked in church. That may be the reason the marriage was not a real one."

She added that they had all signed a certificate, but she did not know where it was; Mr. Grosvenor had kept it.

He then questioned her with respect to her feelings. He wished to discover her character, and to ascertain whether she had any suspicion that she was really Lamel's wife or widow.

"If that accident had not occurred at Ravensdale, and if Mr. Grosvenor had come up to London, and I had gone on living with him, and then found he had deserted me, I don't know what I should have done. I think I should have put an end to myself. But it happened so differently: first I heard he was dead, and upon that I left the lodgings in Park Lane, and took to living by my needle: and before I heard he was alive, I had got used to that sort of life; but still I thought when



"But were you not ambitious for him?" asked Colonel Grosvenor. "Did it not occur to you, that if you had been justly treated, he would have been the heir of Ravenscliffe?"

"No, I never thought of that, that I recollect. At least, I am sure I never wished him to be so!"

"Indeed! May I ask why?"

"Because it would have placed such a distance between him and me."

"And do you think if you recovered him, you would be influenced by the same feeling?"

"I am sure I should. What comfort could I have of him if he lived at Ravenscliffe amongst all those great people?"

The tears swam in the old man's eyes as he laid his hand upon hers.

"You have been cruelly injured," he said, "and cruelly maligned; but you shall have justice, and I pray to God that I may be able to find your boy, and restore him to your arms."

Agnes clasped her hand upon his.

"Oh! thank you! thank you!" she cried. "May God reward you for befriending me!"

He then inquired how she was situated, and if she was in want of money.

"Oh, no!" she said, "we can earn quite enough to keep us."

"But you appear to be in delicate health? and you must not over fatigue yourself."

"It's only anxiety," she answered. "I should soon be well if I had my boy again."

He pressed money on her, but she would not take it.

"Well," he said, "we shall meet again soon. When I wish to see you, I'll meet you here."

She longed to ask him who he was, but she had not the courage to do it.

He then offered to drive her home in his carriage, which she at first refused, but as he insisted, representing that she had been so much agitated that he could not permit her to walk, she yielded;

paternal, and reiterated his promise of seeing her soon.

When Agnes reached her own room, she dropped into the first chair she came to, and for some time all she could say was: "Oh, Martha!" whilst Martha, uncertain whether her agitation proceeded from a sorrowful cause or a glad one, was afraid to ask questions. At length, however, the story was told; and then ensued the wonders and conjectures as to who this good angel could be, and whence arose his interest in her. She knew that Sir Francis had had a brother, and a likeness she discerned to the Ravenscliffe family led her to suspect this might be he; but if it were so, how he should have become her friend she could not by any possibility conceive; nor could she imagine why he should seek her out now when he had never done so before, unless his motive was in some way connected with the fate of her child.

She was strongly tempted to go to Mr. Conyers' office and inquire the old gentleman's name, but was deterred by the apprehension that since he had not introduced himself, there might be a want of delicacy in seeking to penetrate what he might have disclosed had he so pleased.

The Colonel parted from Agnes very much impressed with what he had seen of this sad, pale,

wasted, yet still beautiful young woman, with her deep wrongs and her blasted life. That she was Lionel's legal wife he did not doubt; though why his precious grandson Lewis should have thought proper to be instrumental to the marriage he could not conceive, not having cunning enough to penetrate the far-reaching schemes of Mr. Watson. But what was now to be done? Had Agnes's child been forthcoming, the path to follow would have been clear; but unless he were recovered, it repugned the old man's feelings to unseat Lady Georgina and her son, opening thereby such a volume of scandal to the world, when the result of the proceeding would be to give Agnes a position

taken away through the agency of Watson, whose character and designs he was now beginning to understand. After some consultation with Mr. Conyers, therefore, he returned home.

The first question the Colonel addressed to him, namely, why he had falsely asserted that Lady Georgina was acquainted with the fact of the secret marriage, confounded Watson as much as her ignorance of it had done the Colonel.

"It must have been Louisa Langham you saw," said the latter, comparing notes, "you heard she was there, or had been there; but in that case there is another party to this terrible secret!"

"It's not of much consequence," returned the other, "since it will soon be known to the public."

"Where is that poor young woman's son, Mrs. Gibson, as she calls herself; where is that child?"

The suddenness of the question was a little *ruse* of the old man's, who wished to put the young one off his guard, in order to see if his conscience betrayed him; and it did, giving him all the appearance of guilt that his worst enemy could desire; for although in fact he had had no hand in the abduction of the boy, nor knew where he was more than the Colonel did, yet he could not forget that he had schemed to do that which some-

body else had, in the nick of time, kindly done for him; and also that he had withheld from his grandfather what he perfectly well knew—that the child was not forthcoming. Nevertheless, he assured the Colonel that he had not the most distant notion of what had become of him.

"I don't believe it, Sir; this was evidently not a common case of kidnapping; and who had an interest in the removal of the boy but you?"

"Why Lionel himself, Sir. Of course he did not wish the boy to oust young Sir Francis, as they call him."

"Lionel was thoughtless, and had no steady principles; but I don't believe him capable of such

now be the acknowledged Lady Grosvenor. I am persuaded he had nothing to do with kidnapping the child, and that is the mother's opinion also. I believe firmly that it was you and nobody else; I don't mean that you did it yourself, but that you employed somebody else to do it."

"I am sorry you have so bad an opinion of me, Sir; but you are wrong, I assure you. I had nothing whatever to do with it."

The Colonel shook his head.

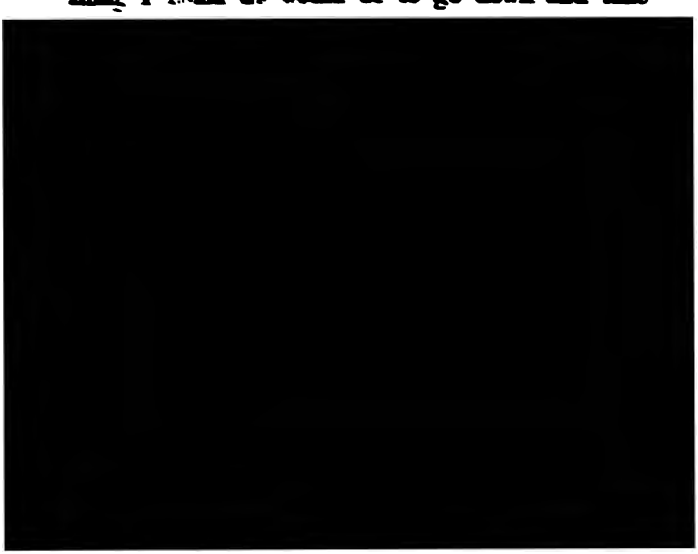
"I don't believe you," he said, "and I shall leave no stone unturned till I find the boy, that you may rely on. With regard to the mother, she shall be handsomely provided for; but as she does not desire to establish any claim on the title and estates of Ravenscliffe, either in her own person or that of her son, there is no necessity for disturbing those in possession." The Colonel said this partly to try Mr. Watson, and also because he really had not made up his mind what line of conduct to pursue.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," returned Lewis. "You seem to forget the claim we have on the property—a claim I think it necessary to see immediately established. You are not a young man, and——"

"I'll be no party to it—none!" said the Colonel, "unless that child turns up."

"Which is very improbable," answered Lewis. "Besides, how prove his identity? On which account, possession being nine points of the law, I intend to move in the business without delay. Even if some boy is produced as Lionel's son, it will not be easy to turn us out when we have once got a firm footing at Ravenscliffe, I fancy."

"No, no," thought Lewis, "I have not been scheming all this while for nothing: and since these inquiries the old man threatens may rake up this child, or, if not himself, some pretender, there is no time to be lost; and as Lady Georgina and her son are gone, I'm not sure but the best thing I could do would be to go down and take



flicted on Lady Georgina and her son, and the disgrace that would accrue to the family, were sources of extreme distress to him.

But the situation of his grandson was different. At that very moment, he himself was the real owner of Ravenscliffe, and Lewis Watson was the next heir to it—that is, provided Agnes's child was no longer in existence; and it was unreasonable to expect that a penniless man would relinquish these claims, in compliment to feelings and sympathies which he did not share. He might be utterly unworthy of the favours of fortune, and the Colonel suspected he was; but that did not entitle him to arrest his movements. It was with intense vexation, therefore, that he saw him depart for London, whilst he felt himself becoming a tool in his grandson's hands. It was his name that would be put forward as the claimant to his brother's title and estates, and all the odium of covering the name of Grosvenor with infamy would be his.

Mr. Watson had been gone some days, and his mother was daily hoping for tidings which his grandfather dreaded, when a letter arrived from Mr. Conyers, which determined the old man to proceed to London immediately. It was to the effect that a woman had come forward, who professed to be able to give some information regarding the child

advertised for at such a date; and Mr. Conyers begged to know whether the Colonel would wish to see her, or whether he should proceed with the business himself.

On the following morning the Colonel started; and he had not been gone more than an hour, when a man rang at the gate, and requested to see him. On being told that he was gone to London, he expressed considerable disappointment, as he had come from there purposely to speak to him on very particular business.

"Please to tell him my name's Hewson," he said "and it was my uncle that lived butler here wit the Colonel for many years."

CHAPTER XIX.

Not a hundred miles from the city of York there stood a handsome mansion, of the Elizabethan style of architecture, called Reston Hall. It was approached from the high road by a noble avenue of elm and oak; a broad, smooth gravel-walk separated the house from a beautiful green pasture, dotted by a flock of sheep and their playful progeny; and on one side a nest of flower-beds reflected the bright sunlight, and scented the air.

The interior of this mansion corresponded with what I have described: there was nothing grand, nothing magnificent; but everything was clean, comfortable, and elegant.

At the period of this our first visit to Reston Hall, there sat in the dining-room a lady and gentleman; the latter, a middle-aged man, with a mili-

[illegible] the former, a fine-looking woman—[illegible] They had finished their dinner, [illegible] had been just removed, when the door opened, and an extremely handsome little boy entered with a hop and a jump, and placed himself beside the gentleman.

"Is that the way to enter the dining-room, Sir?" said the lady. The child coloured, and made no answer. "I wish you'd keep your romps for the nursery, and when you are allowed to come here, behave as you ought to do."

"What did he do? I saw nothing to find fault with," said the gentleman.

"I dare say not," returned the lady: "you never do. It does not signify how rude and ill-[illegible] that boy is: it's all right, in your eyes."

[illegible] the gentleman, laying

"Oh, no, she wont, I'm sure: try her," said the gentleman.

"May I, ma?"

"Upon my word, I don't know; I don't choose to interfere. If you're so cunning as to know exactly what I shall say before you ask, it's not worth while asking at all," said the lady.

Whereupon the gentleman cut off a slice of cake, and gave it to the child, who commenced munching it with great satisfaction.

"Have the goodness to take a plate, Sir, and don't drop your greasy crumbs on the carpet. They get trodden in, and there's quite a black spot, from your standing there every day," said the lady.

The gentleman pushed the child aside, and looked at the carpet.

"I don't see any black spot," he said.

"Of course not. I can only say that Elizabeth was complaining last week of the grease in the dining-room carpet, and she asked me if I knew anything that would take it out."

"There's grease enough, I dare say," said the gentleman, "when there was half a plateful of mock turtle spilt at the last dinner party."

"Pa, may I have one of those green things?"

"No," answered the lady, "you may not have

[redacted] green things. That's the last jar of [redacted] and I really cannot spare you any."

[redacted] helped her self to what was on her own plate, cut [redacted] and began eating her portion herself, put the [redacted] on the boy's mouth.

"[redacted] Tatters, my boy, go out and play, and [redacted] I'll come to you presently, [redacted] have a game at ball."

"[redacted] I said I was to stay here, till she comes [redacted] and then we're going to take a walk," [redacted] the child.

"[redacted] very well. You must do what Driscoll [redacted]"

[redacted] looked eagerly towards the door, at the

"For shame, Sir! What do you mean by telling such stories?"

"Yes, it did, ma. I just gave it a push, and it ran in."

"Archy, my precious! come here," cried the lady, her whole countenance lighting up with maternal delight as the door opened, and a little boy in a white frock and a broad purple sash, led by his nurse, toddled into the room. "How is he, Mrs. Driscoll? Has he had a nice sleep?"

"Oh, yes, Ma'am, bless him! He slept like a top, for an hour and a half, and woke up as fresh as a rose. Take care, Ma'am, he's got hold of your glass; he'll spill the wine over your dress!" a thing no sooner said than done; for, whilst the mamma was rapturously kissing him, the young gentleman, more interested in the shining metal than her caresses, had upset the fluid it contained; whilst the glass rolled on the floor, and was smashed.

"Oh, Archy's broke the glass! Archy's broke the glass, ma!" exclaimed Charles, clapping his hands.

"And what is it to you, if he has, Sir? Have the goodness to mind your own business, and take care you don't do more mischief than he does. Archy's only a baby."

"Wipe your mouth, Master Lawrence; you've got a pocket-handkerchief," said Mrs. Driscoll, sharply. "Why don't you use it, Sir?"

"Now my pet shall go out, and have a nice walk," said the lady, fondly arranging little Archy's toilet; but Archy was not disposed to go: he too wanted a bit of cake, and in addition, his mamma's gold chain; so he clung to her, and manfully resisted Driscoll's efforts to take him. Coaxing was vain; and the mother, although she told him he was very naughty not to go when he was told, could not resist the flattery of those little arms that were twined round her neck; so that finally she consented to a compromise, gave him a piece of cake, and allowed him to take the chain away with him.

It was now the husband's turn to attack her about spoiling Archy—permitting him to eat such unwholesome things, and giving him whatever he cried for; but she argued, that he had had convulsions once, and she was afraid of bringing them on again, if she crossed him. When he was a little older, she should pursue a very different line of conduct; for she detested spoilt children, and she hoped to see Archy a much better behaved child than Charles.

This sketch of one afternoon will do for every day

in the year; for every day in the year, since the birth of Archy, did similar scenes occur.

Mrs. Lawrence, who, I need not observe, was our old friend, Mrs. Aymer, was by no means a hard-hearted woman; and when first she married the Major, she was a kind enough mother to his son; whilst Mrs. Driscoll, who considered her own interests inexorably bound up with the boy's life, was the most careful of attendants: so that little Charles, as he was called, was extremely well off. But a reverse befel him which has befallen many another child: Mrs. Lawrence, his step-mother, became the mother of a child of her own, and Charley's nose, as the phrase is, was put out of joint; not as regarded his father, who loved him as much as ever, and who would doubtless not have permitted him to be ill-treated, if he knew it. But Charley was not ill-treated: he was neither beaten nor starved; but he was checked and snubbed, and altogether dealt with in a manner, that in the long run, when he was somewhat older, was likely to make his home and his step-mother hateful to him.

Mrs. Lawrence herself set the example, and, after some hesitation, Mrs. Driscoll followed it at a humble distance. She had hesitated at first, because natural tendency, as well as habit, inclined her to be kind to a boy on whom hung her own

[redacted] which she perceived clearly which way [redacted] she was too weak to refrain from [redacted]

Mrs Lawrence's feelings in this instance, were [redacted] but they were, it is to be feared, by [redacted] Her husband, at the death [redacted] was entitled to an estate of several [redacted] provided the uncle did [redacted] and as he was past the middle age, and [redacted] to matrimony, the [redacted] the prospect of the inheritance, which [redacted] devolve on his eldest son; and, [redacted] circumstances, it may be easily under- [redacted] Charles was not an agreeable object to

the secret must live and die with themselves. Willie Gibson must inherit General Lawrence's estate, and Archy must be content with the position of a younger son.

Yet, for all that, Mrs. Driscoll could not help dallying with the power she possessed. If she quarrelled with her husband, she would threaten to tell "he knew what;" and when she was in a bad humour with Charles, she often exclaimed, that if he didn't take care, she'd soon get him turned out of that home, and sent to a very different kind of house, where he would have to be made a tailor or a shoemaker, and be obliged to work for his bread; whilst at other times she threw out hints to Mrs. Lawrence, that if that lady had had the slightest clue, must certainly have awakened her suspicions. But, in spite of this coquetting, Mrs. Driscoll had no intention whatever of betraying herself: the motive was not sufficient, and the penalty was too great.

Affairs had been for some time in this position at Reston Hall, when an advertisement appeared in the "Times," headed "*Child lost or stolen.*" Date, place, and other circumstances, were then named, and a reward of £500 offered to any one who would give such information as would lead to his recovery. But Major Lawrence did not take

the "Times," a
would probably
So Charles mig
and Archy to be
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eyes, she would
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CHAPTER XX.

Mrs. Smithers kept a lodging-house in Duke Street, St. James's; and it was there, as I have formerly mentioned, that Mrs. Driscoll had lodged with her two charges, Charles Lawrence and her own little girl. Mrs. Smithers kept the lodging-house still; and it so happened that her first floor was inhabited by a Member of Parliament, of whom she was not a little proud, and about whose affairs she was not a little curious; insomuch that, under an idea that she might discover some important State secrets, she always made a point of peeping into the ends of his letters — luckily for her, envelopes not being in such general use then as they are now; and when he went out, she invariably paid a visit to his writing-table, and inspected his papers.

As Mr. Briggs was a club-man, he had no occasion to take any of the daily journals, since he read them more agreeably whilst lounging over his breakfast in Pall Mall; but whenever he proposed to make a speech, he always desired the "Times" to be sent to his lodgings, in order that he might preserve for posterity these specimens of his eloquence. Thus, when Mrs. Smithers went upon these voyages of discovery, she now and then spent a pleasant half-hour in perusing the news; and she had, one day, just rubbed her spectacles, and placed them securely on her nose, when her eye was attracted by an advertisement in the second column of that paper, headed "Child lost or stolen, April 10th, [redacted] reward," &c. to anybody that could [redacted] his recovery,

on sharp about the candles. I'll do it. There's rm in trying, any ways."

the following morning, Mrs. Smithers pre- l herself at No. 6, Saville Row, and requested ow if one Mr. Cony lived there? The clerks ed in her face, and said "No;" which she ked was very singular, since she had read it in ewspaper, and she was sure that was the house as to go to.

is led to an inquiry of what she wanted; and Conyers being out of town, the head clerk her a few questions, the answers to which ed him to write to Colonel Grosvenor: "For," ie, "no time should be lost. People of this often get tampered with; besides, the child be removed beyond our reach, if those who took ave any particular interest in getting him out e way."

about four-and-twenty hours after the receipt s letter, in the same room in which the Colonel iet Agnes, he found Mrs. Smithers.

Your servant, Sir," said she, rising as he en- "I suppose you be the gentleman as put in ere advertisement about the child as was lost or ; if it be the one I mean, *I* say stolen."

Then you've reason to think you know some- about the child?"

"I think I do, Sir. I've a notion he was st—d by a woman as lodged in my house, in Duke Stree St. James's. She left me, this last March was thre years on that very day as is named in the advertise-ment."

"Have the goodness to tell me the particulars, and the grounds of your suspicion. Pray be seated."

"Well, Sir," said Mrs. Smithers, squatting her-self into a red leather arm-chair; "it's now upwards of four years agone that she comed to lodge with me."

"Pray, what was her name?" inquired the Colonel, anxious to discover if it were any one with whom he could trace a connexion with his grandson.

that was why she'd comed to me in Duke Street, because she could get in easy at the gate in St. James's Place: 'And so,' says she, 'have you a couple of rooms on the second floor that I could have?' Well, Sir, I was rather surprised to hear her ask for my second floor, because it's mostly gentlefolks as takes it; I had Mr. Jones, as is one of the clerks at Coutts's, the banker's, for a matter of three years and more. However, I told her it was vacant just then, but that I could not let it under fifteen shillings a week for the winter, and a guinea a week for the season, when the Members of Parliament was in town."

"Well, I suppose she took it?" said the Colonel.

"Why, yes, Sir, to my surprise she did; but when I heard how she was sitivated, I saw the reason of it. 'This here boy,' says she, 'is the son of a officer, and I have the care on him—his mamma being dead, poor thing! and I'm obliged to live in good sitivations, you see; but it isn't I as pays the rent.' 'So far so good!' says I; so in she comed the very next day—I remember it was of a Saturday, and it was rather inconwenient because we'd got the stair carpets up, and I wanted to give 'em a wash down afore the first floor comed in, which I'd just let it to Captain Peasebody, as was a



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it till the day after the funeral, and then we just put 'em off, and said the child had died of water in the head."

"Well," said the Colonel, who began to discern some meaning in all this talk; "I suppose the death of the child was a great trouble to her?"

"Sure enough it was, Sir; as she said herself, it was just the loss of a fortin to her and her family."

"And it was to replace this boy, I suppose, that you think she stole the other?"

"Well, Sir; it was a singler thing, and it seemed a Providence like; but it wasn't many days afore the child was taken ill, that Mrs. Driscoll said to me, said she—she'd been down to the Adelphi, about a little matter of business I'd asked her to do for me, when she went into the city—'Well, Mrs. Smithers,' says she, 'I'm blest if I haven't seen a child to-day so like Master Lawrence, that you might take 'em to be brothers.'

"'You have?' says I.

"'Yes,' says she; 'it was down by the Adelphi there, where I went with your parcel; only he wasn't a gentleman's child; but if he'd been dressed like Master Lawrence I think I'd scarce known one from the other.'"

"And you are sure it was at the Adelphi she saw the child?"



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"'Well, it never comed here,' says Nance."

"And did she go to her sister?" inquired the Colonel, in order to resume the thread of the narrative.

"Why, Sir, in course I thought she did; for she went away from my house bag and baggage in a hackney coach; but what should I hear some time afterwards, but that she'd been living up in the Edgeware Road, next door but one to my late husband's sister-in-law, Mrs. Philpots."

"Indeed!" said the Colonel.

"And the curousest thing was, Sir, that she'd got two children with her—a boy and a girl, just as when she was with me!"

"And did you see the child—the boy she had got with her?"

"No, Sir; because afore I had time to go and take a cup of tea with Mrs. Philpots, which she'd been time out of mind asking me for to do, they was gone from there, nobody know'd where."

"But this Mrs. Philpots knew her, then?"

"She'd seen her, Sir, at my house, one day some time afore; but she said, that if it hadn't been for the two children, she didn't know as she'd ha' known her again; as she never see her but once, and then not to speak to her."

"Then, perhaps she was mistaken?"

"No, Sir; for as soon as I heard on it, my mind misgived me somehow, and I made it my business to call at the house, and inquire for her. 'Is Mrs. Driscoll at home?' says I, just nat'ral like, not letting on I know'd anything.

"'No,' says the girl as answered the door, 'she's gone from here into the country.'

"'And the children with her?' says I.

"'Yes,' says she; 'they're all gone.'

"'And how was Master Lawrence?' says I. 'I heard he'd been ill!' I said that just to try her, you know.

"'Oh, he's well enough,' says she. 'I never saw nothing the matter with him, except he was very fretful when first they came.' When I told Betsey—that's Mrs. Philpots—that Master Lawrence was dead and buried, I thought she'd ha' swooned away."

So far Mrs. Smithers could tell; but what had become of this woman and the children since, she had no notion; she recollected, however, that Mrs. Driscoll had a sister called Barber, who worked with Madame de Ville, the French milliner, in Bruton Street, where some information might probably be obtained.

CHAPTER XXI.

Mr. Watson found no difficulty in discovering a lawyer who took the same view of the case that he did; namely, that his grandfather ought to put in his claim immediately; and that under all the circumstances, including the possibility of the child by the first marriage being produced, the politic thing was to take immediate possession of Ravenscliffe Castle, let those who choose dislodge him at their peril. But since Colonel Grosvenor declined taking any part in the proceedings, what was to be done?

"Prove him *non compos*," said the lawyer. "His refusing to claim what there is such a strong presumption he's entitled to, will furnish us very good grounds to begin upon; and you as the next heir can enforce the claim."

On the plan laid out by this limb of the law, it is



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but the habit of deference prevailed, and touching his hat, he answered respectfully, "That he had got a job about Lawson's livery stables."

"I'm glad of it," said Watson, clapping his waistcoat pockets, as if to feel if he had any money in them. "I've nothing with me," he said, in an under tone, adding in a louder key, "you must call upon me, some day. I'm at the 'Hummums,'" and nodding his head he walked on.

"Somebody 'll call upon him that he little expects some day soon, I fancy," said Leighton. "It's just as if Providence sent him this way; for he might have been in town long enough before I could have told where to find him, and I didn't know but what he was out of the country."

Mr. Watson had had a comfortable dinner in the coffee-room of the 'Hummums,' and having finished his pint of claret, had gone up stairs to pack his portmanteau, when the waiter knocked at the door, and said a man below wished to speak to him. Expecting a dispatch from his lawyer, he said, "Send him up!" Presently afterwards the door opened, and a stranger appeared. He had no papers in his hand, and he had not the appearance of a lawyer's clerk; moreover, Watson recognised him for the man whom he had seen standing beside Leighton in the morning.

"I beg your pardon, Sir," said the stranger. "My name's Hewson. My uncle lived butler with Colonel Grosvenor at the Elms."

"Oh! and you're old Hewson's nephew, are you?"

"Yes, Sir; and I came about a thing I thought it was best to speak to you or the Colonel about. I went down to the Elms; but the Colonel was come up to London."

"When was this?"

"I only come back yesterday, Sir; and I was going to seek the Colonel, when you happening to pass my door, the man that was with me told me who you were: so I thought it better to mention it

must be some mistake about it, but the man was so positive, that I thought there would be no harm in just mentioning it."

Watson scarcely knew whether to press for further information or not, being afraid of what he might hear. How Leighton had discovered that the articles advertised were his, he couldn't conceive, but at all events the discovery was alarming, and might lead to other suspicions. Still fear and curiosity urged him, and he said, with as much carelessness as he could assume, that he wondered why anybody should suppose the things were his.

"It seems quite out of the way, Sir, to be sure," answered Hewson; "but the man was sent to prison, it seems, for a thing he says he never done, and it's put things into his head as never should have been there. I was like to quarrel with him the first time he mentioned it to me, for the Colonel was a good master to my uncle, and has always been a friend to our family; and that's why I went down to the Elms, for the man seemed so determined that I was afraid mischief might come of it."

There was mischief impending then! Leighton must have discovered that he had been in the neighbourhood of Ravenscliffe that night, and was drawing conclusions from the circumstance. Were

they only conclusions, or had he fallen on some proof?

"My grandfather was very much attached to your uncle, I know," said Watson, desirous of securing Hewson's good-will.

"Yes, Sir; and of course it was very unpleasant to me to hear such things said against the family."

"I don't know any reason that fellow Leighton can have to speak ill of us. When he was in Paris lately, in great distress, I did what I could to assist him; but I'm afraid my cousin's ill opinion of him was too well founded; he always told me to beware of him."

"Indeed, Sir; I'm sure I'm very glad I came to you; for he told such a story of his misfortunes, and how he was falsely accused and put into jail, that he quite got round me and my wife, we pitied him being out of bread so long; but we'll have no more to say to him;" and with this determination Hewson took his departure, leaving Mr. Watson in a very different state of mind to that he found him in. The hands slackened that were packing the portmanteau; it was scarcely advisable to go to Ravenscliffe now, nor to take any step that would court public attention. He was in that situation in which a man feels that the less is said about him the better, and began to think he should

be safer and more out of the way at the Elms than in London.

In the meantime, Leighton, who at heart was a timid man, little disposed to energetic action of any sort, was hesitating how to proceed; he wanted advice, and did not know where to get it; and in this state of mind he came back to Hewson's in the evening to relieve himself by a chat, but he found a different reception to that which usually awaited him.

"To be plain with you," said Hewson, "we wish to break off the acquaintance. You'll be none the worse, nor we neither, and things 'll go on just as they did before."

Mrs. Hewson turned away and busied herself about something in the room, for she felt sorry for the man. Leighton rose and took his hat, saying, he did not wish to press his company on anybody. He looked pale, and his hand shook, for it was a bitter thing to hear said in a house he had found a welcome in; and Hewson, who was a remarkably kind-hearted person, could not resist excusing his harshness, by avowing the cause—he found he had slandered a family for whom he, Hewson, and his uncle before him, entertained the greatest respect.

"And you are sure the dog and portmanteau are his?" asked Parsons. "Because if they are, the strongest thing against him is his denying of it. For say he'd forgotten 'em all this time, or didn't think 'em worth claiming, that's no reason he should deny 'em being his."

The other, declaring his certainty of the facts alleged, Parsons desired him to walk in and wait a bit till he could find a magistrate at leisure to give his attention to the business; but when Leighton narrated his tale, elate with the hope that a warrant would be immediately issued for the apprehension of Watson, the magistrate demurred at the evidence. There was nobody's word for all this but that of a suspected person; and even supposing the dog and the portmanteau did belong to the gentleman in question, it did not follow that it was he who had made the attack on Mr. Grosvenor.

"But if they're his, why does he deny them, your worship," said Leighton, borrowing the hint from Parsons, "if he isn't afraid to own them?"

But the magistrate had too nice a sense of his own dignity to accept a shrewd suggestion that had not originated with himself, and was consequently less disposed than before to adopt the views of the witness. He inclined to the notion that the gentleman had disowned the things because in fact



CHAPTER XXII.

CHARLEY LAWRENCE was standing in the corner, in the nursery, at Reston Hall, wiping away with his pinafore the tears that streamed down his rosy face. Archy and he had been playing together, when the former, for some trifling cause, began to cry; whereupon Mrs. Driscoll, hearing her mistress on the stairs, fell into a violent passion with Charley, and giving him a smart box on the ear, thrust him into the corner, telling him he was the plague of her life, and that she wished she'd never seen his face; a sentiment she reiterated to Mrs. Lawrence, who entered the room with a letter in her hand.

"This is for you, Driscoll," said the lady, giving it to her. "What has that naughty boy been doing now?"

"He's always making that dear child cry, with



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moment? My God! Have done, Sir! I'll smack you, if you don't! That old Smithers! Cunning devil! Will you leave the paper alone, Sir? I'll put you in the corner, in a minute, to stand beside your brother! What, in the name of the Lord, shall I do?"

Then, after reflecting, she folded up the letter, and put it in her pocket, washed the tears from Archy's face, desired Charley to stay where he was till she came back; and, under the impression that there was no time to lose, descended the stairs to her mistress's bed-room, into which she had heard her go when she left the nursery.

"What's the matter, Driscoll? There's nothing wrong with my pet, is there?"

"No, Ma'am, bless him! He's quite well, thank God! And certainly the sun never shone on a sweeter infant. I never thought I could have loved a child, that wasn't my own, as I love this one; and often and often, when I've looked at him, it's been like a dagger in my heart to think that there should be one in the way to take from him what ought to be his!" Here she wiped her eyes.

"Well, Driscoll," said Mrs. Lawrence, unable to understand this sudden emotion, "it *is* hard, certainly; but we must not repine at the dispensations of Providence, you know."



blown up, and artificially sustained the assiduities of the ladies in scanty petticoats, had soon coo where the cheerful parties of the gentlemen were much more a prayer and Dorcas meetings, whi well in their day to fill up the v ence. She was not resigned at a loss what to say to an exordium t troduced a proposal to "make with this incommodious elder bro

But if Mrs. Lawrence was n Driscoll was in despair. She sobbing in the most piteous man hugging and kissing Archy, in blubbering, till Mrs. Lawrence and exclaimed:

"Good heavens! what's th

"In the name of God, woman, what do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Lawrence, snatching up the infant, and laying her hand on the bell-pull; for she actually began to believe that the nurse's enthusiasm for Archy had seduced her into the commission of murder.

"Don't—don't ring, Ma'am; pray don't, and I'll tell you all!"

"All what?" cried Mrs. Lawrence. "Get off your knees, woman, and speak, or I shall go mad."

Then out it came, amidst sobs, and groans, and ejaculations—Charles was not Major Lawrence's child. The boy died of the scarlet fever; and fear of blame, and the father's grief, and the loss of the stipend, had overcome her principle, and she had substituted another, &c.

At first, Mrs. Lawrence did not believe her. She thought it was some mad scheme, prompted by that same enthusiasm, for the younger child; but Mrs. Driscoll swore and protested that her tale was true, entering into all the details of her crime, but with one exception: she did not confess that she had discovered to whom the boy belonged—that being an aggravation of her guilt that she thought it better to keep to herself.

Whatever gratification this intelligence was calculated ultimately to afford her, Mrs. Lawrence was,



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...the nursery, and keep her c...
...sent; and then putting on h...
...the vicarage, to make a com...
...and ask his advice.

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...passed her—there were post...
...in which sat Colonel Gross...
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...the Major, we will return t...
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Seldom has the pride ...

added a barb to the arrow when they anticipated the probability that Lewis Watson would succeed to the estate; he by whose cognisance and connivance, in the first instance, and his eagerness to take advantage of the dilemma, in the second, filled them with indignation and disgust.

It was in consequence of this feeling that now, for the first time, the name of Agnes Crawfurd came to be uttered amongst them, unaccompanied by scorn and contumely. It was now that Isabel dared to stand up for her friend, for young people are easily talked down by authority; and, in spite of her secret leanings, she had been silenced and perplexed by the confident denunciations of everybody belonging to her.

By this time, Henry Langham and his wife were separated, not legally, nor by mutual consent; for she was still very much attached to him, and it was much against hers; but her attachment could not overcome her love of argument, and after several unsuccessful attempts at release, he proposed certain amicable arrangements, which she perforce acceded to, but which, finding herself unhappy under them, she incessantly transgressed. She had neither temper to live with him, nor resolution to live away from him. Considered, therefore, in their matri-



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except as related to him by his wife; but this much-condemned and lamented escapade of Isabel's had now assumed a new interest, from the unexpected disclosures regarding Lionel's first marriage; and everything she had to tell about Agnes was listened to with eager curiosity. It was not their cue to abuse her now, for, however unwelcome she might be as Lady Grosvenor, the balance betwixt an heir, of whom she was the mother, on one side, and Mr. Lewis Watson on the other, decidedly inclined in her favour.

Accompanied by Louisa, who had been staying with them, Lady Grosvenor and Isabel arrived shortly before dinner; and having been welcomed by Mr. Damer and his wife, the two elder sisters retired to have a chat, Louisa all agitation at the prospect of meeting her husband.

"For God's sake be on your guard," said Frances. "My mind misgives me horribly, that you will fall into an argument with Henry about this business as soon as you come together. Say nothing, rather than differ with him in the smallest degree; for if once you begin an argument it's like gunpowder—there's no preventing an explosion." Louisa disowned the possibility of such a thing, lamenting, at the same time, with tears in her eyes, that Harry could not bear contradiction.

he met this young man there, and took a fancy to him, and I'm very glad of it; for he used to look so lonely when I went into the library to bid him good night as I was going out; but he's quite comfortable now he's got a companion that likes the same pursuits as himself."

In the meantime, whilst her sisters had been chatting in Mrs. Langham's bedroom, Isabel had been making haste with her toilet in hopes of getting a few minutes alone, with Mr. Damer, before dinner. There had always existed a very kindly feeling between them, and there was no member of the family whose feelings and opinions regarding this new aspect of affairs, she desired so much to learn as his. Moreover, she wished to have an opportunity of imbueing him with favourable sentiments towards Agnes; or, at all events, to remove prejudices which it was very natural he should entertain. With this view she descended early to the drawing-room, and according to her expectations the first person that entered it was her brother-in-law.

"Dear Bel," he said, "how glad I am to see you once more."

"I wanted," she said, after mutual salutations, "to have a few words with you before mamma and my sisters come down. I don't know whether you are acquainted with the particulars of what occurred



CHAPTER XXIII.

Overwhelmed with disappointment at finding his testimony not believed, or at least insufficient to procure the arrest of Watson, Leighton, full of his injuries, called on Agnes to tell her of all he had discovered and of his ill success. He had not seen her for a considerable time, for she encouraged no visits but those of the faithful John Gibson, and of Mr. Capel, whom she had not seen for some months.

"It's just as I thought," he said. "You know I told you that ever since what happened in Paris, I suspected that fellow was the cause of my ruin, and this business about the dog and the portmanteau proves it as satisfactory to my mind as if it had been sworn in a court of justice; but the magistrate



was sitting a... Mr. ... Warren. "I think some... —gentleman. I believe ... much the worse. But ... walking in the road just ... asked him what compa... was."

"I remember him," ... saw his face. He was ... a handkerchief over his ... quite dark."

"If you remember," ... where the coach stopp... struck me then he was ... in the road when we ... some... I remember h... and had him get a ch... backwards and forward...

As it was no uncommon thing to pick up passengers on the road, this suspicion had not struck John before; but now the probability of the thing impressed them all.

"After the coach drove away that night," said John, "I saw a bit of paper on the ground, and it struck me that it was that gentleman that had dropped it; but it warn't money, it was only a bit of a letter."

"I'd give five pounds if I had as much, for that bit of paper," said Leighton. "There might be his name on it if it was a letter.

"I'll see if I've got it yet," said John, blushing. "I shouldn't wonder if I have."

"That would be very odd," said Martha, "to keep a bit of paper all this time." At which remark John's face grew redder still, but he made no answer. The fact was, that from that time to the present, that same bit of paper with Agnes's old handkerchief folded in it, had lain at the bottom of the box in which he kept his clothes, and now that he was engaged to marry Martha, he had more than once, when his eye fell on the little parcel, felt a certain degree of delicate embarrassment as to what he should do with this sacred relic of his early worship. To keep it was improper, and if found by Martha it might lead to questions he did not wish to

answer: and yet to throw it away was irreverent. This conversation inspired the idea of a middle course. He would neither keep it nor throw it away; he would give the paper to Leighton, who could read; and he would restore the handkerchief to its original owner by depositing it secretly in Agnes's room the next time he called.

Before this event occurred, however, Agnes received a note from Mr. Conyers, requesting her to be at his house on the following morning at half-past nine: a summons that made her heart beat with anxious hopes and fears. She was punctual to the minute, and when she drove up to the door in a hackney coach, a chaise and four that was already

ignorance leaves us, to the possibility of a dreaded conviction. So was it with Agnes. The blood rushed back upon her heart, her limbs trembled under her; but she obeyed in silence. Mr. Conyers handed her into the carriage, and they drove away. She sat back in one corner, with her veil drawn over her face, and he in the other; but once, when her agitation got the better of her, and he saw she was weeping convulsively, he said:

"Keep up your spirits. I hope we are going to hear good news."

The journey seemed long, and yet she durst not wish it at an end, lest she should be wishing away moments of irrecoverable bliss: for, whilst she wept, and bade herself not hope, she hoped everything she most desired on earth.

They had for some time had the river in sight, and at length they stopped at the gate of an elegant villa on its banks; the gate was thrown open; they drove in; and Mr. Conyers assisted her to alight, aided by two or three servants in livery, who preceded her to a room on the dining-room floor, with a bay-window looking over the Thames. The butler threw open the door, and without being announced, she found herself in a room full of books, globes, maps, bronzes and busts. In a large library chair sat the old gentleman she had met at

giving him a little carriage, and he also remembered something about the Adelphi Hotel; at least, he said he remembered once being in a large house, with a great many rooms, that he used to run about and play in. Mrs. Driscoll's own confession, however, and the resemblance to Lionel, were sufficient to establish the child's identity to the complete satisfaction of the family.

When her first transports of joy were over, and Colonel Grosvenor had informed her through what chain of circumstances the boy had been recovered, Agnes warmly poured out her thanks to him for his kind interference, and ventured to ask him—for yet she knew not—why he had interested himself in her favour. Then he told her who he was, and gradually broke to her the fact that they believed her to have been Lionel Grosvenor's legal wife; and that in that case her son was now Sir William Grosvenor, and the owner of Ravenscliffe. Agnes put her hands before her face and wept; but this time they were not tears of joy.

"Then he might as well have not been found! He'll be taken away from me, and I shall scarcely be allowed to see him!"

But the Colonel assured her that should not be the case.

"You are his natural guardian, no other having

That was another bitter pill for the Dowager, who would probably not have consented, but for a combination of circumstances that smoothed away the difficulties; one of these being, that Isabel, since her Paris adventure, was considered scarcely *présentable* as Miss Grosvenor; especially when so much public attention would be inevitably drawn to this extraordinary family *dénouement*. Above all, however, her consent was won by an arrangement entered into betwixt Agnes and Isabel, at the request of the former; namely, that Mr. and Mrs. Capel should reside at, and do the honours of Ravenscliffe Castle; that Mr. Capel, whom Mr. Damer pronounced the fittest person in the world for the office, should undertake the management of the young Baronet, and the direction of his education; and that Agnes, whose whole heart now was given to her boy, should live secluded in a suite of apartments appropriated to her use, and be allowed to eschew the great world for which she felt herself by habit and education unsuitable.

There was another couple of lovers, however, to whose hopes all these happy events at first seemed fatal. Honest John Gibson hung his head when he heard his intended wife's sister was Lady Grosvenor, and Martha agreed with him, that for Agnes's sake they must relinquish their engage-

ment: the marriage would give such a shock to the Dowager and her daughters. But Agnes forbad this sacrifice.

"Marry our good John, dear sister," she said; "we will shock nobody, nor do anything that would not be right in my present position; but wherever you live, in London, or elsewhere, I and my boy will come often and see you; and I have already talked to Colonel Grosvenor about the means of making you both comfortable for life."

In short, with the exception of the Watsons, everybody was tolerably content with these issues; but Lewis Watson was outrageous, and directed his solicitor to take proceedings against the boy that had

to Leighton; and in order to wipe off the stain and rehabilitate him, Mr. Damer took him into his own service; and the Ravenscliffe family presented him with five hundred pounds, and a written testimonial of their good opinion.

THE END.

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